

A THEOLOGY OF PRAYER
REFORMULATED
TOWARD THE KOREAN CHURCH

A Professional Project
Presented to the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont
In Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

Jay Suh Yang
May 1983

This professional project, completed by

Jay Suh Yang,

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Cornelia R. Rogers

Chan-Hie Kim

April 17, 1983
Date

Joseph C. Skergh
Dean

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Purpose	
B. Methods	
C. Procedure	
D. Limitations	
II. PRAYER IN KOREA	5
A. God in traditional religions	
1) Shamanism	
2) Buddhism	
3) Confucianism	
B. Prayer in the Korean Church	
1) A historical sketch	
2) A spiritual ethos	
3) A direction of prayer	
C. Practices of prayer	
1) An early morning prayer	
2) Other prayer activities in the church	
3) Prayer and culture	
III. THE DIMENSIONS OF PRAYER -FIELD STUDY-	36
A. Introduction	
B. Methods used	
C. Interpretation of responses	
D. Concluding remarks	

IV. A THEOLOGY OF PRAYER REFORMULATED	49
A. Introduction	
B. Biblical bases of prayer	
1) The prayer of Job	
2) The prayer of psalms	
3) Jesus' prayer	
4) Paul and prayer	
C. Theological foundations	
1) The nature of God	
2) The nature of Holy Spirit	
3) Prayer and holiness	
4) Understanding of prayer	
(a) D. Bonhoeffer	
(b) J. Cobb	
D. Fractional implications of prayer	
1) Silence	
2) Intercession	
3) Eucharist	
4) Growth	
E. Conclusion	
V. A PLAN OF LEARNING PRAYER	81
A. The Christian prayer	
B. The techniques of prayer	
C. The process of prayer	
D. The fruits of prayer	

VI. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

105

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX

- A. Questionnaire
- B. Analysis of Questionnaire

ABSTRACT

Prayer has been a priority in the life of the Korean church. Historically prayer has been emphasized in order to cause the church to grow qualitatively and quantitatively. The writer became convinced that the Korean church could grow, because of the earnest acts of prayer in relation to suffering. He then realized that prayer and suffering have interacted in the history of the Christian church in Korea. We begged Shaman to bless and asked Buddha to protect us from our enemies, and we relied upon Confucius to solidify our nation. They were all powerless in the midst of crises.

The writer reviewed the traditional concept of the gods in order to distinguish between our old gods and rituals and our Christian God and rituals. The Christian monotheistic concept of God could be easily understood in Korea. Unless we study our old religions we cannot correctly understand Christian spirituality within the church. Along this line Christian prayer is enriched and distorted by our religious culture and locality.

Even though the Korean church has a short history of missions, there are good traditions in the revivals and prayer habits. The writer suggested that the early morning prayer session should be more flexible, while present revivals must take into consideration a balance between Bible study and evangelistic preaching.

The writer has claimed that the understanding of prayer and prayer practices should be reviewed in the light of the teachings of the Bible and contemporary references. The writer has found that the concept of prayer did not change for those Koreans who are living in the United States, but they were forced to change their prayer practices because of differing circumstances.

The writer tried to formulate a theology of prayer for the Korean church. He tried to explore it in connection with suffering as revealed in the Bible. He then introduced the nature of God, particularly the suffering of God as developed in process theology.

Finally, the writer suggested possible lessons on Christian prayer based upon our necessities. He suggested that we need to make proper programs of learning Christian prayer and to call for new leadership to carry responsibility for those things in the Korean church.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

Suffering and prayer have been factors which have determined our spirituality in the history of the Korean church. We can agree that prayers become very serious when we are in the midst of suffering.

The practice of prayer has been a major thrust in the growth of the Korean church. Historically speaking, prayer practices were among the tools to be empowered by the Spirit to win people to Christ.

As with the Jewish people, our first prayers were for survival. The Jews have encountered defeat and despair throughout their history. Their prayers were based on the works of deliverance they had experienced in Egypt, in the desert, and in Abraham's call from his ancient land. Just as for the Jewish people, a full life, a rich life and a long life were the heart of Korean prayer.

There are many prayer activities in the Korean church which sometimes bring confusion and doubt to the young and the intellectual. They are demanding not only to understand what Christian prayer is all about but also to form a prayer life which would be relevant to their existence. In this perspective, the writer began to look into prayer practices in the Korean church. He has been convinced that Korean Christians should reevaluate their prayer life by studying biblical and contemporary references.

Thus the purpose of this study is to explore a theology of prayer, including some disciplines of the Korean church. Such a theology of prayer will be formulated from the perspective of process theology. This project is designed to contribute to the church in Korea as well as to Korean churches in the United States.

B. METHODS

There are two methods applied in this project: library research and field studies.

The library research is based upon books in the field. In order to discuss prayer in Korea, the writer has read Korean books written by Korean authors.

The field survey has been conducted in two ways. One was designed to discover the understandings and attitudes of prayer through use of questionnaires, while the other was conducted through interviews concerning early morning prayer sessions. The writer could not find any articles dealing with early morning prayer. There is only one book. It is entitled, Theology of Daybreak Prayer. It did not lend itself to a discussion of early morning prayer. Fortunately, the writer could get information personally from the retired Korean Methodist bishop, Kyong Jae Lee, who started his ministry in the early years of Christian mission work in Korea.

The procedures and dates will be presented in detail following the chapters.

C. PROCEDURE

The contents of the project will reveal the procedures used and the ideas that the author would like to express: his theories concerning the theology and discipline of prayer for the Korean church.

He will first deal with prayer in Korea. We should know our roots in order to develop our spirituality as it reflects the world in which we live. There are some issues that the writer would like to expose in the first stage: who god was in the past and how Korean Christians prayed in the last decades. Then, in the second chapter, what we have inherited and where we are headed. This chapter will review the ideas of god and prayer that have been exposed in the traditional religions. It will include an interview dealing with the practice of prayer in the life of the church. This second chapter will be a preliminary research to illumine the picture of what we have inherited.

Second, the writer will deal with the field study, which is designed to acquire knowledge of the present prayer life in the Korean church. The questions that the writer included are concerned with private prayer, group prayer, worship prayer, and world prayer. He will expect to identify areas of strength and weakness at the present time. In order to discuss the field study more subjectively, those who responded to the questionnaires are identified as "they" instead of "we".

Third, the writer will try to formulate a theology of prayer based on the previous chapters. The references are not strictly confined to the field of process theology. There are some biblical references. The writer will start to review Bible passages which focus on prayer and suffering.

Fourth, the writer will try to plan a strategy for learning Christian prayer. There are practical topics of prayer in this chapter that we should study if we hope to learn about prayer in the life of the church. The final pages will be devoted to conclusions and suggestions based on the research and discussion of the whole project.

D. LIMITATIONS

This project is limited because of its primary consideration of the Korean church. There are many things that the writer desires to know about prayer and prayer life but that he cannot describe articulately due to a somewhat limited knowledge of the English language.

The writer has not enough knowledge in dealing with the field study. Thus he tries to make it simple to interpret. There are some areas that one might like to enlarge or reduce. One thing the writer knows is that prayers can be changed according to cultures and times. Our prayers should be Christian prayers which are firmly founded in Christ Jesus. Finally, this is a subject that the writer would like to develop for the Korean church.

CHAPTER II

PRAYERS IN KOREA

A. GOD IN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

1) Shamanism

Shamanism is a primitive religion scattered throughout the Far eastern countries. It was the original ground into which other religions could be transplanted.

Who is the god in this religion? What are the different concepts of god that we believe in? In Shamanism there are many spirits and demons, and they are often represented as the gods.¹ A few of the spirits are beneficial, but almost all are definitely malignant, so the writer would like to call it a religion of fear.

There is a supreme god who controls the small gods in the shamanistic structure. A supreme god was often called "Ok Wang Sang Chei" in the past, and this concept was introduced into Korea later. Most scholars in this area agree that there are two classes of deity; small gods and the supreme god.²

¹Charles A. Clark, Religions of old Korea (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1961) 199-200. He illustrated the gods and explained them in detail; there are the site gods, mountain gods, water gods, and the mountain pass gods.

²Tongshik Ryu, The Christian faith encounters the religions of Korea (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1965) 18. He said that Koreans had directed special requests to the supreme (such as a request for rain. They asked the small gods for daily needs.

Koreans generally accept the belief that the supreme god reigns over all things in heaven and earth, and the ruler of the universe gives rain and grain to harvest. We began to call him, "Ha Nu Nim" in the Korean language. There are, of course, some slight variations in his name in the development of the concept of god.³

Literally it may be translated "sky master," or "the great one." Koreans have admired the heaven. We have believed that god is there and gives good things and bad things. These three words might be interpreted, "the only great master," which would correspond to the biblical concept of god as well as the Christian idea of god. The Christian missionaries could accept it, based upon a similar meaning in Bible translations. Later the Korean church changed the middle character, "nu," into the "na" in making the Korean Bible. "Ha Na" is closer to the biblical concept of God. Semantically, "Ha Na" has many meanings; one, large, and great, while "Nim" is an honorific which usually follows the name of the noun. The writer translates "Ha Na Nim" to mean "the only heavenly One." It was quite close to the monotheistic concept of god, so that we could understand the Christian God quickly. Spencer Palmer adequately showed its usage in Korean society.

³Institute of Korean national culture, Hankook Moonwhasa Daekye Vol. VI. (Seoul: Korea University Press, 1978) 6:117-173. here is a precious article which deals with the historical development of the concept of Hanu Nim in Korean religion.

Occupying a position of supremacy among the spiritual powers of primitive folk belief was Hananim, to whom Koreans prayed, and from whom Koreans expected protections and guidance. Hananim was not associated with the gods of Confucianism, but his existence as an indigenous, personalized deity, did have a significant effect even upon the intellectual classes.⁴

The concept of Ha Na Nim did not seem to come out suddenly; rather it has evolved, from polytheism to polytheistic monotheism. This discussion was supported by the description of Shamanism in the religious dictionary.

The primitive religion of these tribes is polytheism or polydemonism, with strong roots in nature-worship, and generally with a supreme God overall. While the Shaman exercises certain priestly functions, his main power are connected with healing and divination. These he exercises by virtue of his intimate relations with the supernatural world.⁵

The Shaman is called Mudang or Pansu in Korea. The nearest term in English is "sorceress," or "exorcist." As time went by, women had roles of Mudang, while the blind men could become Pansus. They are considered the lowest class in the social system. They are also treated mediums like the mediator, Jesus Christ. They are not only the bringers of happiness, but also the messengers between the living person and the dead.⁶ There are a few of Pansu, while most Shaman are women.

⁴Spencer Palmer, Korea and Christianity (Seoul: Hollym, 1967) 90-91.

⁵J. A. MacCulloch, "Shamanism," in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (Edinburgh: Clark, 1954) 11:441.

⁶Ryu, 22. He maintained that the Christ, the mediator, might be easily understood based upon the understanding of the Mudangs.

The mudangs have become the masters of ceremonies in the religious rituals. Jung Young Lee explains the function of rituals in focusing on the festivals within the family setting. "The Shamanistic ceremonies are kind of ritual praying for peace and protection of the home. It is namely asking the gods to protect the house and to keep peace of the family life. When the mudang is invited to perform the rituals, there will be singing and dancing along with the prayer. That is why the shamanistic ceremony can be part of recreation and joy for people."⁷

2) Buddhism

Buddhism has been a strong and dominant influence on the Korean mind. During the course of history there were many outstanding monks and temples. Buddhism was introduced by a Chinese monk, Sundo, to the northern kingdom, in the year 372 A.D.. This new religion spread over nearby kingdoms like wildfire. It flourished under royal patronage for thousands of years. There was one great monk, Wonhyo (617-686 A.D.)⁸ on whom Korean buddhism depended.

In order to defend the national security, the Buddhists asked for divine assistance in finishing the immense project of carving the Buddhist scriptures into wooden panels. It took 16 years to complete

⁷Jung Young Lee, "The seasonal rituals of Korean Shamanism," History of religions, 12 (February 1973) 276.

⁸Ryu, 40-54. Wonhyo sought to make the religion popular and applicable to daily lives. His thought could be traced to the Mahayana Buddhis (the Great Vehicle). Korean buddhism strongly reflected this tradition.

Tripitaka Koreana which is still stored in the Haein temple. It is considered one of the most outstanding compilations in the Buddhist history.

One might ask, "Is Buddhism a religion or a philosophy?" after one read a kind of introductory book of Buddhism. The answer might be resolved, depending upon one's standpoint. It was not only a religion which seeks an ultimate reality, but also a philosophy which has sophisticated disciplines.⁹

The Buddha, the founder of Buddhism not only denied the existence of God, but also denied being a God, himself. He maintained that one could become a Buddha, the enlightened one, through hard discipline. Later this position was more emphasized in Mahayana circles. "In mahayana the Bodhisattva (being or body of light) path was based upon the assumption that every man is a potential Buddha. The path to buddhahood might be extremely hard and eons long, but laymen and monks alike may set their feet upon it. The motives were aspiration for enlightenment and compassion of mankind."¹⁰

The buddha perceived a world full of suffering. He sought to be free from the mortal misery of life. He asked how those types of situations could be cured. His teachings concerned man and his salvation rather than faith in God. He developed a highly esoteric philosophy by means of renunciation of worldly desires. He advocated

⁹John B. Cobb, Jr., The Structure of Christian Existence (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967) 148. He has observed that Buddhism offers one of the most compelling religious alternatives today.

¹⁰John A. Hutchison, Paths of Faith (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969) 134.

the avoidance of earthly suffering by following spiritual discipline.¹¹ He also taught people how to attain Nirvana, which could be identical to heaven in Christianity. It is a state of ultimate completion, not attained by God but accomplished by human efforts. He taught us that we could be aware of it here in this present life. "Rather than the end of craving Per Se, Nirvana is that which is realized when craving is ended. It is neither matter nor energy, and it has no location in space and time. It is not perceived by the senses, nor is it a thought, concept, mood or emotion. Though an Arahant is conscious of Nirvana, it is not consciousness in any sense by which we normally understand that word. It is indivisible, timeless, changeless, unborn and not compounded."¹²

The Buddhists expect eternal emptiness through meditation, while Christians wait for God through prayer. They may visualize the final state of Nirvana when sensory images are no longer valid. Buddhism has aged-long rituals. The pattern of devotion is different from that of Christianity. It emphasizes meditation - individual meditation. The widespread discipline is known as Chamsun in Korea, Samadhi in India, and Zen in Japan.¹³ The contents of meditation used to be in Indian sanscrit that monks repeated again and again. There

¹¹Ibid., 113. There are very important doctrines in Buddhism which teach us to practice, "the four Noble truths and the Noble eightfold path." It is explained in detail in this book.

¹²Maurice O'Walshe, Pathways of Buddhist Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) 184-185.

¹³There were many Western scholars who were concerned about eastern disciplines of spirituality, particularly the Zen. Catholic Father Thomas Merton was among them. It was he who recognized that could give us feeling of liberation from egotistic society.

were many monks who did not know what they meant, but their discipline was strict. Prayer begins at 4 A.M. and closes at 9 P.M.. The writer once saw, in front of the temple, a big poster which read, "A thousand day prayer session for national security." They meditate, while Christians pray.

3) Confucianism

Confucianism became established in Korea earlier than Buddhism. The early Kingdoms left records that reflected the Confucian influence. It was adopted as a state religion during the Yi dynasty. The government supported Confucianism over Buddhism. Early Confucians followed such a strict form that the Chinese, themselves, regarded the Korean adherents as more virtuous than themselves. They referred to Korea as "the country of Eastern decorum," indicating the punctiliousness with which the Koreans observed all phases of the doctrinal ritual. Like the Chinese, Koreans believed that loyalty to the king, faithfulness to friends, and fraternal love are cherished as the cardinal virtues. Above all, filial piety was considered the root of all moral principles.

Ancestor worship¹⁴ which can often be hailed as a religion in

¹⁴The writer read a newspaper article in recent years in regard to ancestor worship. A mother killed herself because her son avoided participation in ancestor worship in her family. Most people still think of this as an important ritual that should be followed. Ancestor worship has been turned down by many Korean Christians. Some scholars maintain that it was not opposed to the worship of God. It was reported that many Japanese Christians bow regularly before the tablets, explaining that, while bowing, they pray to God, and not to the spirit. We had a tragic era when thousands of Korean catholic Christians were put to death because they had refused to bow before the tablets. Still it is a Christian custom that they do not bow their head, except to the God revealed in the Bible.

itself, is the result of extending filial piety to the dead.

Although mixed with other religious elements, it had been responsible for ceremonials in every family. The eldest son of the family would preside at the ritual, usually performed in the main room of the house. It is implied that the ancestors are not entirely dead - that their souls continue to live and watch over the lives of their descendents.¹⁵

Confucius (about 551-479 B.C.) himself shed little light on the problems of god, soul, and immortality. He was not overly interested in the gods and the supernatural. However, he did not seem to have been actively opposed to them. "However, when Tzu-lu asked him how to serve the spirits, he replied, "you are not yet able to serve men, how can you serve spirits?" Tzu-lu then asked about death, and was told, "you do not yet understand life; how can you understand death?"¹⁶

There were frequent references to Heaven and god in the Confucian classics. The god (Ti or Shang Ti in Chinese) was often perceived as a supernatural being with a human face - a white-haired old man. Confucians also believed that one of the soul went to the realm of heaven. "Heaven" had been used in various ways in Chinese writings. According to Fung Yu-Lun, this word occurs with five different meanings.¹⁷

¹⁵The writer read an article that tried to compare the Christian eucharist with ancestor worship in the light of "holy Dinner." The author of the article suggests that bowing at the table is similar to the coming to the table with fear.

¹⁶H.G. Creel, *Confucius and the Chinese Way* (New York: Harper & Row, 1949) 115.

¹⁷Yu-Lan Fung, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952) 31; 1)sky 2)Imperial heaven 3)Supreme emperor 4)Nature 5)The highest primordial principle of the universe.

Confucius confessed that he believed that his vocation and mission were given by heaven. He believed that heaven called him and sent him forth. This belief was called, "the mandate of heaven," which gave him the meaning of life. During his years of wandering and rejection, this conviction sustained him. Confucius was, in this sense, a religious man.

Students are still asking whether Confucianism is a religion. Some say it is not a religion, asserting that it is simply and plainly an ethical philosophy. The writer, as he has reviewed its nature, would say that it is a humanistic religion. This religion has performed the part of religion in terms of social functioning and individual fulfillment as well.¹⁸

B. PRAYER IN THE KOREAN CHURCH

1) An historical sketch

There is some supposition that Nestorian Christianity might have contacted Koreans long centuries ago. The mission work of Nestorians was traced in China and had left evidence. When, then, did Christianity get started in Korea? Christianity came to be known in Korea in two ways: one from China and the other from Japan.

The history of Christianity in Korea began with the contact of the Japanese soldiers who invaded our country in 1592, at the time of

¹⁸Hutchison, 211. He observed Confucianism as a system of holy forms. He suggests that it has the possibility of being religious in the Confucian structure.

Hideyoshi. It was recorded that one of the Japanese generals, Konishi, was a Christian, and he brought a Jesuit priest, Gregori De Cespedes, to Korea during the time of the invasion. Thousands of Koreans were converted by them in the southern part of the country. Unfortunately, these first Christians did not seem to keep up their new religion.¹⁹

In 1777, a group of Korean scholars went to a Chinese temple to study the writings of Confucius and Mencius. They came into contact with Christian literature written in Chinese. In 1783, when Seung Hoon Lee had been sent to Peking, his friend, Chung, urged him to get in touch with the Catholic priests and to bring back information and books on Christianity. Peking became the headquarters of the Korean catholic church. All questions about faith and order were referred to Peking.

Peking headquarters made a very shocking decision which forbade Korean Christians to take part in Ancestor worship. Bloody governmental persecutions followed one after another. Tens of thousands of Korean catholics gave their lives for the Christian faith. Many catholic missionaries also were persecuted because of their faith.²⁰

¹⁹Kyung Bae Min, Church history of Korea (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1973) 35-39. The writer wrote depending upon this book.

²⁰Ibid., 85. Professor Min agreed with the other scholars on the fact that there were about eight thousand martyrs within three years (1866-1869). It was believed that there were over a thousand martyrs since then.

Before the Protestant missionaries came into Korea, there were several people working outside of Korea whose work influenced the development of the Korean church. There was a group of young men who worked with the Rev. John Ross, a Scottish Presbyterian missionary working in Manchuria, China. He invited four young Koreans to his home and asked them to translate the Gospel of Luke and, later, the whole New Testament, into Korean. Among them was Mr. Sang Yoon Suh, who was converted and baptized by a missionary, the Rev. J. McIntyre and became the first Korean Protestant Christian. In 1880, the translation of the Gospels and acts was completed outside of Korea.

There were many Christian missionaries who resided in both Japan and China waiting for the opening of Korea to Westerners. It was recorded that the Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries arrived in Inchon harbour in 1885, at the same time, after the Korean-American treaty was agreed upon.²¹ They built churches, schools and hospitals. Through them, the Christian Gospel spread across the country. These two denominations, therefore, form a strong majority of the Christian church in Korea.

2) A spiritual ethos

Korea had been isolated from foreign countries, but at the end

²¹The Protestant mission work began three years after the Korean-American treaty was agreed upon. The year 1982 is the year of the centennial celebration of diplomatic relations between the two countries. This treaty permitted American citizens to trade at the open ports of Korea and to erect residences. It was the first and most favorable treaty that Korea had with any foreign country.

of the 19th century she was forced to open herself to the outside world. European nations and America were looking toward the East for expansion. In the midst of intrusions of China and Japan, she began to be aware of powerlessness, economically and politically. Even worse, Koreans were tired of the traditional religions. We were helpless, so we began to turn our eyes to the new religion, Christianity, expecting to be empowered.

One used to cry for help whenever one was driven to despair. When one was under adversity, one turned to supernatural powers. Our anxiety and frustration became overpowering, so we prayed to supernatural powers. We wished for a more peaceful and stable life, particularly at the turn of the century. Palmer described the Korean situation well at this period. "The general situation was one of harsh times. Its main situation was one of deprivation-despair caused by the inability to obtain the ordinary satisfactions of life. Expectations were frustrated. There was a sense of confusion, a loss of orientation, and there was no longer a foundation for security. The world had become a sinking ship. The ancient spiritual supports of the people (Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism) had fallen into disrepute and disuse, the peasantry were restless under a venal and oppressive nobility."²²

The years from 1885 to 1910 comprised a very decisive period for national and spiritual crises. We came into a great awakening

²²Palmer, 77-78.

period for religious development, while we began to lose control of our nation to Japan. It was a happening. Korea's paradoxical situation was similar to the Cross of Christianity. The cross is a symbol of shame for non-Christians, but it is also a sign of glory for Christians.

A study of Korean history of that era reveals that we Koreans had to turn for help to a supernatural deity when the Chinese were attacking us. Finally, Japan dominated the nation in 1905. In the midst of conflict, the missionaries could help in overcoming difficulties. Thus, missionary efforts filled our needs, and this led to the revivals.

From 1903 to 1910 there was a period of great awakening within Korean churches. This great revival was distinctively a Methodist movement.²³ It is supported by the missionary report. "In the summer of 1903 a godly woman, a Methodist missionary working in China came on a visit to Wonsan. On her way from the steamer to the missionary home she said, 'how about having a Bible conference in Wonsan this summer?' Out of this suggestion came the revival. The Holy Spirit came in power upon that little company gathering together day after day to study God's word and wait before Him in prayer. Among this company was the man whom God had chosen to bring

²³George L. Paik, The history of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910 (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1970) 358. Dr. Paik described events of this period as "the revival and the growth of the church." On the other hand Professor Min said, particularly of the years 1907-1910: to lay the foundation of Christian life in Korea.

about the revival in Korea, Dr. R.A. Hardie, a Methodist missionary in charge of the work at Wonsan."²⁴

The Bible conference repeated, and Bible study over the country at the beginning of 1907. The annual Bible training class met at Pyongyang, in January of 1907. The class met for a ten-day session and took up Bible study in the daytime. The evenings were entirely devoted to special evangelistic preaching. The revivals were characterized by Bible study and evangelistic worship. Dr. Paik described the three factors in meeting the needs of the participants in the revival at that time. "First was a sense of failure, which created a "divided soul," next was the desire for heightening of the spiritual experience by messages from the outside; and third, the definite attempt of the missionaries to bring about a revival."²⁵

It was time for harvest. Koreans were ready to accept the Gospel and its instructions. The missionaries were surprised to see how they responded to the revivals. Here is a report that properly describes the revival meeting.

"After a short sermon, Mr. (Graham) Lee took charge of the meeting and called for prayer. So many began praying that Mr. Lee said, "if you want to pray like that, all pray," and the whole audience began to pray out loud all together. The effect was indescribable, not confusion, but a vast harmony of souls and spirit, a mingling together of souls

²⁴Charles A. Sauer (ed.), Within the Gate (Seoul: Korea Methodist News Service, 1934) 114.

²⁵Paik, 370.

moved by an irresistible impulse of prayer. The prayer sounded to me like the falling of many waters, an ocean of prayer beating against God's throne."²⁶

One might easily tell that one of the outcomes of the revivals was a greater confidence in Christian prayer. It not only caused churches to grow, but also determined the character of the Christian church in Korea. Here is another report given by Dr. Paik: "The Koreans are praying for souls with an intensive and simple faith which puts to shame those of us in Christian lands. Last winter during some revival meetings in Songdo, it was a common thing for Christians to go out on the hills after the evening meeting and kneel on the frozen ground while they cried to God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. At Chai Ryung at 5:30 each morning several Koreans came to the house of the missionary with whom I was staying to spend an hour in prayer with him. At Pyongyang pastor Kil and an elder were in the habit of meeting at the church for prayer at dawn each morning."²⁷

There is evidence that the recent revivals have put more emphasis on emotional preaching. The writer regrets that we have lost the balance between evangelistic preaching and Bible study.

3) A direction of prayer

Religious revivals became the movements which met the spiritual

²⁶Ibid., 371.

²⁷Ibid., 377.

needs of the people. This spiritual movement intensified the passion of the people for winning others to Christ. It produced the "a million souls for Jesus," movement within the Methodist mission in 1909. The goal was not met, but this was the first Christian movement to bring peoples into churches.

"The whole evangelical Christian constituency in Korea joined in the movement and prosecuted it with its new-found religious zeal and ardor. The campaign gave self-contained people self-expression. It was the first national undertaking of the Korean people in religious propaganda. Young and old, men and women, students, laity, and all Christian workers made strenuous efforts to make the watchword a reality."²⁸

In order to overcome anxiety and crises faced in reality, the revival meetings, which were otherworldly, swept over the country. The Korean leaders of this movement had a strong shamanistic-buddhistic background. People were frustrated by the society and the government. We turned to the church, which was condemning any kind of positive concern for society and politics. Conservative puritanism, with a strong sense of otherworldliness, could be helpful in abating the despair and frustration in our lives. There were, of course, quite a few young people who wanted to join the church. They could not be observers only while seeing Christian churches becoming centers of escapism. They expected Christianity to be a social agent which

²⁸Ibid., 386.

might enable the people to fight for political freedom and facilitate their efforts to modernize the nation. They were disappointed and left the churches because of continuing feelings of powerlessness.

On the other hand, the missionaries preached moral strength which could be identified with Koreans impacted by Confucianism. Once we were converted and became Christians we should exercise Christian faith in order to grow toward Christian perfection. To stop smoking, drinking, and gambling seemed to be a sign of being a Christian. Those were the outward signs of mature Christians. There was a weird story relating to the preaching of the Rev. Sunjoo Kil.²⁹

The absurdity of some of the charges against Korean Christians is well illustrated by the case of pastor Kil of Ping Yang. He was charged with treason for preaching against the evil of cigarette-smoking amongst boys. The analysis of the charge is a masterpiece for Jevons' logic.

It is as follows; pastor Kil preached against the use of cigarettes. Cigarette manufacture is a government monopoly. To speak against their use is to injure a government institution. To work against the government is treason. Therefore pastor Kil is guilty of treason. This is but an example of the working of the Japanese courts in Korea.

The pattern of Christian faith inherited from missionaries and Christian leaders in Korea has emphasized person-centered Christianity. Moral decisions were thought to be the highest ones that Christians could make. Tongshik Ryu strongly urges us to seriously

²⁹It is a well-known fact that pastor Sunjoo Kil was the first pastor to lead a dawn prayer session in Korea. It was in the year 1906. The writer would like to introduce his biography following the next section. His life reveals his spirituality.

reconsider our Christian life.³⁰ He defined the Korean church as having an individualistic character. Second, he reported that Korean churches had strongly emphasized otherworldly salvation. That was why revivalism and mysticism were popular. Third, he pointed out that we stuck to legalism (on the basis of Jewish law) and lost humanity. Fourth, we were too confused to understand the Christian Gospel that indicated that the sacred and the profane were one.

In line with these discussions, Christian prayer could be imagined. Though rooted in Jesus Christ and the development of the Christian church, it was still limited by specific cultures and places. Korean Christians have been forced by their own needs to pray to God. We have been known as "the people of prayer." Here the writer would like to stress two points by which we, Korean Christians, should evaluate our prayer life. First, he sees that the motives of prayer were much inclined to be selfish. It means that there might be a lack of commitment and dedication in our prayers. Without them, prayers easily become only an emotional appeal. With them we can have life-transforming experiences. Prayers with commitment and dedication can lead in new directions by which God wants us to move forward. Then our prayers can give us new power and joy. Second, our prayers should always be reexamined in the light of biblical faith. We are still demanding an opportunity to study what the Bible teaches us to pray. This is our prayer, "Lord, teach us to pray," just as Jesus' disciples

³⁰Ryu, 240.

asked Him.

C. PRACTICES IN PRAYER

1) An early morning prayer

This is the most typical church gathering in the life of Korean churches. Western Christians do not know much about it. Instead they have had morning devotions. Morning prayer is a kind of daily devotion practiced in churches in the early morning. It usually starts at four thirty or five o'clock in the morning. It never stops throughout the year. Most churches, whether they are in the city or in the country, hold these meetings. Pastors should meet these spiritual sessions every day.

A theologian, Aaron Park, who was once on the faculty of Presbyterian Theological Seminary, stated that Koreans had inherited a great legacy, which he would call "a theology of dawning prayer."³¹ The early morning prayer did not seem to have a theology yet. Rather it seems to be a spiritual discipline that Korean Christians have typically cherished. Before Christianity came into Korea, there were some devout believers who had prayed to the deity in the early morning. Most of the pastors were the faithful believers of the traditional religions. They already had a frame of religious orientation. Among

³¹Aaron Park, Theology of daybreak prayer (Seoul: Sejong, 1974) He suggests that there be three elements involved in the early morning prayer session; Mystery, Tranquility, and Vitality. The writer would like to ask him where these factors originated. He did not want to discuss these moods in relation to the traditional religions. We had prayerlife before we began to learn the Christian life. The three elements that Dr. Park suggested might be found in the prayers of shamanistic rituals.

them was the Rev. Sunjoo Kil, who had been recognized the first minister to lead early morning prayer. Most of the scholars in this area³² attributed to him credit for being the first pastor to initiate it. There was no objection to accepting the fact that he started this movement in 1906. Here is a brief biographical sketch.

"He was born in Anjoo, Pyangan Namdo in 1869. He grew up in a poor family so that he could not learn enough about Chinese study. He started a small business. He heard that his business would flourish if he believed in Buddhism. So he became a Buddhist. He spent three years in Ankook temple to practice Zen meditation from 1892-1895. He opened the store in Pyongyang after learning the practice of oriental medicine in the temple. He agreed to participate in the revival led by Graham Lee, an American missionary in Pyongyang. There he was converted and was baptized in 1897. He became one of seven theological students and was first to graduate from Pyongyang Theological Seminary. He not only was a person of prayers, but also a famous revivalist. He was put in jail for three years for being involved in the Korean independent movement. He died in 1935 while he was leading a service in the church in an early morning."³³

What, then, were the motives for starting this session? How was it managed? We have a report of the development of the first early morning prayer session reported by a Methodist missionary, George Jones.

³²The writer has in mind Professor Kyung Bae Min, L. George Paik, and Aaron Park.

³³Allen D. Clark, A History of the Church in Korea (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1971) 423-428.

The writer read other references and feels that the person that he mentioned seemed to be the Rev. Sunjoo Kil.

"The pastor of one of the churches in Korea felt that his church had been deflected a little from the pathway of power they had discovered in the days of the revival. So he took one of his leading layman into his confidence, and they entered into a compact to go to the church secretly each morning at four o'clock and intercede with God for the church. They were successful in eluding observation for a few days, but soon some members of the church discovered what they were doing, and they too began to go to church at that early hour for prayer. As the number increased, the pastor decided to take his congregation into his confidence, so one Sunday morning he told him the facts and announced that any who felt moved by the Spirit of God to join them in that prayer service might do so. The first morning there were three hundred present. The three hundred increased to five hundred after a few days, and finally that daily prayer meeting at four o'clock in the morning numbered seven hundred. This went on for a while, and then the pastor announced that he thought they had prayed enough and had better get to work, so he took a collection, not of money, but of days of service, and that prayer meeting resolved itself into a committee to visit the membership of its parish and present Christ to them."³⁴

The early morning prayer session has caused Korean churches to

³⁴George H. Jones, The Korea mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church (New York: Board of Foreign Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, 1910) 51-52.

grow spiritually and physically, as well. The missionaries assisted in this established discipline. Before Korean Christians practiced this morning prayer service, the shamanistic rituals had included prayer to the deity to bring blessings and to avoid curses. These were the major things that we were still praying for in the early morning prayer services. The writer could point out that it was the meeting place for traditional spirituality and puritan instruction.

There were almost no articles or any research on this subject in the past. The writer fortunately knew a retired Korean Methodist bishop who had just come to reside in Claremont, California. The writer must attest that he is a proper witness to the character of early morning prayer. The following interview was arranged at his residence on November 10, 1981.³⁵ There are five questions and responses in an interview.

Q 1 : An early morning prayer has been practiced in Korean churches as one of the beautiful traditions. First of all, what do you think of it?

A 1 : It is recorded in the Old Testament that one prays in the morning. Jesus Christ also went out to pray in an early morning. I believe in that Christians are required to do these early morning prayer.

³⁵The bishop, Kyung Jae Lee started his ministry in Pyongyang after he had graduated from the theological school in Japan. He had been not only a chairman of Korean revival mission but also a local pastor. He has traveled around the country to lead the revival. He has also practiced an early morning prayer service during his entire life. He can be a reference person on this matter.

Therefore I'm very proud that the Korean churches have emphasized this early morning prayer session.

Q 2 : Could you tell me what kind of constituency and procedure they have?

A 2 : It's mostly composed of older people. Generally I begin by singing one hymn, then we read one chapter of the Bible. While I was explaining the chapter, I suggested that the congregation choose one topic of prayer based upon the instruction. Then I asked them to pray freely and individually as long a time as was permitted. The time of the opening session depended upon the local churches. I usually started at four thirty or five in the morning.

Q 3 : As the writer understands, you have traveled from town to town to lead the revivals for a long time. I can guess that there are some differences between urban churches and country churches. Were you aware of them?

A 3 : First of all it has been running throughout the nation. The country churches seem to be more active, while the urban churches are struggling. The former consume their time more in prayer, while the latter spend their time studying the Bible. There are still older people, who are illiterate, in rural churches, so they tend to ignore the practice of studying the Bible.

Q 4 : Historically an early morning prayer meeting started with the revival meeting at the same time. It seemed to have a close relationship with the revival as well as church growth. How do

you interpret this?

A 4 : It has, of course, a close relationship with the revival. One happens to have joy and dedication through the revival. The problem we face is how to conserve its result and to keep and develop Christianity in one's own life. It should be supported within their church in order that Christian discipleship will grow and ripen continually after the revival. I cannot think of church growth without practicing prayers. No one can underestimate the value of prayers having been practiced by old people in the church. An early morning prayer may be a major force to bring church growth in Korea.

Q 5 : The writer assumes that as a town becomes industrialized people will be busier than before. The pastors are also going to be busy in order to cope with many ministerial duties. It is going to be a burden for pastors to run these prayer sessions without stopping a day throughout the year. The writer heard that there were some churches which decided not to run this service in Seoul. Finally the writer would like to hear your comments about its future.

A 5 : Unlike the American churches, if Korean churches lose their traditions, which have been cherished, they will be weakened further. They should run these prayer hours continually, in spite of any sacrifices. I also have sympathy for pastors that they must carry many pastoral works, plus the early morning prayer service. They should keep in mind that Korean churches are

under a special situation, that they are being threatened by the North Korea regime. Thus I am convinced that this hour be continued and increased in the life of the church.

2) Other prayer activities in the church

Most prayer activities in Korea have been linked to worship in the life of the church. Besides the Sunday morning worship service, there are many worship services involving prayer sessions. We have Wednesday and Friday night prayer services which are closely related to prayer and worship.

In this section, the writer is going to deal with the two prayer sessions, for they have been important services in the Korean church. There is no record of the date when week-day prayer services were started in Korea. One can just assume that they started early in missionary circles. The Wednesday prayer service is called, "mid-week service," in the western churches. It is less formal than the Sunday morning and evening worship services. Usually fewer numbers come to this service. This service has many hymns and prayers aimed at spiritual enrichment. Of course, these are followed by short preaching or teaching of the Gospel or the Bible. Pastors usually ask the congregations to pray aloud without being conscious of persons next to them. This will be extemporaneous prayer. Prayers and prayer activities were the major parts of the worship in the Wednesday prayer meeting in the past. As time went by, this has varied depending on the pastoral policy. There is a tendency to try to include Bible study in the service, usually lasting one hour and a half. Korean Christians

learn Christian prayer by participating in this prayer session. When the time comes to pray together, pastors sometimes suggest to the people the specific topics to ask of God.

Most Korean Christians are not familiar with silent prayer. We are sometimes required to meditate at the beginning of the worship so we whisper our prayers. For us, prayer is a cry for God based upon the thoughts of psalmists and prophets in the Old Testament. We should accept the inner cry of the soul as a kind of prayer.

City churches find it harder to have Wednesday prayer meetings than country churches do. As the cities become bigger, people become busier and are involved in many affairs. Even worse, in the cities we are losing the spirit of community which can be nurtured in the life of the church.

The Friday overnight prayer service has become very popular in recent years among the evangelical and pentecostal churches. As the name indicates, it lasts from Friday night until early Saturday morning. Usually it takes place in the church, but there are some churches that hold this meeting in the mountains. Our reason for this meeting is to remember the suffering of Christ on the cross on Friday. We come to the church on Friday with a feeling of participation in Christ's suffering.

This prayer meeting is very beneficial when we have enough time to carry out the various programs. The meeting usually starts at nine o'clock, or later, in the evening. The people can share everything they know or feel in the life of the church. This also becomes a fellowship meeting for the congregation.

The pastors ask them to witness before the group or the audience. They sometimes ask participants to divide into smaller groups to pray for one another. Some churches spend three hours or five hours on Friday night. The others close at two o'clock in the morning. Participants are free to go to sleep on the floor or pews in the church, or to pray as they want to. Once the prayer services pass the midnight hour, they cannot return home because of the curfew.³⁶ They are forced to remain in the church until the curfew is lifted in the morning. There are some who continue to participate in the early morning prayer session.

This overnight prayer service provides not only Christian fellowship but also a chance to come closer to God. The pastors ask participants for intercessory prayer. They pray earnestly for the nation to be reunited and for the evangelization of Korea. It is said that Youngraek Presbyterian Church once had two thousand people attending this Friday overnight service. This type of prayer meeting provides enough time for any programs the pastors want.³⁷

3) Prayer and culture

According to the traditional religions, our pattern of prayer had three different roots; one is from the shamanistic rituals that give

³⁶There were very few areas that did not have the curfew system. Now it has been lifted all across the country as of the first day of January, 1982. The prayer service can be scheduled at any time

³⁷The writer happens to know a seminary student who has just arrived from Korea and has been given some information from him in order to develop this section.

Koreans the desire to call upon the gods by means of the extemporaneous prayer, second is from the buddhistic rituals that may motivate us to employ prayer of repetition, third is from the confucian rituals that may bring us the pharisaic prayer.³⁸ One could see, in the ceremonies, lots of oracles coming out of the Mudangs. One could observe the prayers of monks in the temple. Monks even pray what they do not know. One could find the norm of rituals practiced by the confucians. They respect the norm more than the content.

From these perspectives we began to practice Christian prayer. We used to kneel down with twisted legs when we began to pray to God. It is one of our expressions of lowliness in the presence of God. We should close our eyes in prayer and benediction. We are familiar with the custom of saying, "amen" or "Hallelujah" in responding to the words of prayer when we agree with what persons are praying.

Prayers seem to be recognized as the panacea in the life of the church. "No stories of early Christians in Korea would be complete without telling of Christian men and women praying night and day for God's power to cure the demon possessed."³⁹ Our prayers, in general, do not go beyond the traditional wishes: that is, to live long, to have children, to acquire wealth, and to maintain health. We begin to

³⁸The Gospel teaches us to avoid the repetition of words in prayer, "and in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words (Matt. 6:7)." Another Gospel tells us a story of the Pharisee and tax collector and how they prayed in the temple (Luke 18:9-14).

³⁹Sauer, 69.

practice Christian prayer based upon those frames of religious life. Thus our prayer life cannot be fully explained without considering traditional religious cultures. Here is a discussion expressing facts of our religious life which are strongly influenced by our cultural background.

"The buddhist idea of causality in the future life was retained in the legalistic Christian piety of retribution. The Old Testament texts are favored very much by Korean preachers and the Old Jewish laws are being emphasized too literally, for instance, the law of the Sabbath Day and legalization of tithes. Revivalistic preachings terrified and threatened the simple believers accusing them of sins of disobedience to the laws. Retribution rather than forgiveness is preached more emphatically as if the laws could make people do good works which would pledge for future reward hereafter. Often the law-piety has fallen into a mere formalism which is very similar to that of Confucianism in its essence."⁴⁰

So whenever we Christians visit homes or business offices, we pray for the prosperity and blessings for those within. There are more faithful believers who also pray again when they depart. Prayer always follows as we live on. Here is another critical observation of Christian life. Chang Sik Lee said:

"There would be nothing when the poor, the sick, and the solitary comes to the church in order to be blessed, but eudemonistic interest in Christian faith would make no essential difference between Christianity

⁴⁰Chang Sik Lee, "Rethinking some aspects of devotional life," in Harold S. Hong (ed.) Korea: Struggles for Christ (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1966) 169-170.

and other existing religions. Happiness is usually regarded as a token of God's blessing for one's religion and good faith. On the other hand suffering is regarded usually as God's retribution against one's sin."⁴¹

We have learned Christian discipline based on the conservative and apocalyptic types of faith practiced by the missionaries. Thus our life was based on these premises. This type of Christian life has not emphasized social customs. Our prayer life, according to principles taught by the missionaries, is expected to transform our cultural heritages to fit the demands of the Christian life. The principles of prayer will be discussed in later chapters. We cannot ignore the fact that cultural heritages work in some ways to facilitate the Gospel of Christ and its acceptance in an indigenous church. We should know who we were in the past in order to respond to our present needs. His discussion is still applicable:

"First of all, it has emphasized a personal piety, personal evangelism, and person-centered Christianity which has nurtured a strong vocation to evangelism. Through this personal piety, the Gospel was able to reach out widely. It made Korean Christians an earnest Bible-reading people. It made them a diligent church-going people. It made them lovers of daybreak prayer, and above all, it made them careful of their souls and of their final salvation in the world to come."⁴²

⁴¹Ibid., 172.

⁴²Chong-choon Kim, "The confessing church in Korea," in

There are emerging small groups in the Korean church which seek the alternative of person-centered Christian life. They are composed of intellectual young people. They have asked themselves how their prayer can reach out and touch someone. They have sought to open dialogues with other old religions. They have tried to envision what the real Christian life is all about in the foreign land. They are still a minority among minorities in Korea. They have to correctly evaluate the typical prayer habits that they have inherited. In this way they can create an alternative to Christian spirituality in Korea.

CHAPTER III

THE DIMENSIONS OF PRAYER - FIELD STUDY

A. INTRODUCTION

We have inherited a typical discipline of prayer which is regularly exercised in the life of the church. We discussed and concluded, in the previous chapter, that the growth of churches in Korea is the result of earnest acts of prayer. Accordingly, our experience has indicated that growing churches are those in which prayer is emphasized. Pastors and lay people, alike, have believed that prayers are the major tools that have empowered both individuals and churches.

The writer, on the other hand, has come to the conclusion that the discipline, as it has been practiced in our churches, should be changed to meet the demands of new generations. We Korean Christians have learned Christian prayer through participating in the worship of the church.

In this chapter, the writer would like to report what Korean Christians think about prayers, based on responses given in the questionnaire¹ which was composed by the writer for use in the field study. The questionnaire that was used in this field study is designed to reveal the general understandings and attitudes about prayer and prayer life. The questions are concerned with our need for prayer and

¹See Appendix A.

satisfaction gained from it.

The writer will expect to gain, from the field study, some ideas for improving the disciplines of prayer and prayer life. The questionnaires were sent to Koreans living in the United States. There are, of course, some limitations in dealing with them effectively. These will be revealed in the following discussion. The writer hopes to illustrate, in this chapter, the points that we need to reinforce in order to enrich our prayer life.

B. METHODS USED

The questions on the questionnaire have been adopted from the article, "A picture of my prayer life," found in the workbook, Exploring the Dimensions of Prayer.² The questions were revised in order to enable the respondents to choose one of three alternatives for each question asked: yes, no, or unsure. The reason for revising the questions was to facilitate a correct presentation of each person's thoughts on the issue raised.

In the above mentioned workbook there are 20 questions. Each question has either a yes or no response, which is intended to expose four dimensions of prayer life: personal, group, corporate, and world dimension. The writer, in his field study, tried to follow these 20 questions, but there were 3 questions that might not be appropriate to ask at this moment, even though we are now living in the United States.

²Maxie Dunnam and others, Exploring the Dimensions of Prayer (Nashville: Upper Room, 1979).

The questions were changed a little in order to be fitted to our situations.

The last 10 questions were added by the writer because he considered them to be important to prayer life. The first 20 questions will be discussed on the bases of the different dimensions given the above, while the last 10 random questions will be interpreted one by one. The results will be summarized as the concluding remarks.

During September of 1981, the questionnaires were distributed by mail to lay people of the Korean Methodist churches in the United States with the help of the local pastors.³ Two people were asked by the pastor of each local church to send the responses back to the writer. There were 100 copies which were mailed out with stamped return envelopes. Twenty-five responses were received by the end of the year, 1981. One of these responses was not filled out completely, so it was not included in our final analysis.⁴

The questionnaire is designed to take about 20 or 30 minutes for completion. Signatures were optional. There is no indication of the ages of those who responded to this questionnaire. There are some obstacles involved with the questionnaire that the writer sent, because it is written in English. There were people who needed assistance in answering it.

³The list of the Korean Methodist churches was taken from the yearly publication. Center for Asian-American Ministries, The Directory of Asian-American Methodist Ministers and Churches (Claremont, CA: School of Theology at Claremont, 1981)

⁴See Appendix B.

Finally, the writer is open to suggestions regarding the content, validity, reliability, and procedures used in this study.

C. INTERPRETATION OF RESPONSES

1) Dimensions

a) Personal dimension. The responses reveal that private prayer is a very important element in the life of the church, that Korean Christians have practiced private prayer, that they are anxious to improve their method of praying, and that they want their desires to be fulfilled through the practice of prayer. That is the universal nature of humanity which has not surfaced in reality. They still want to grow to Christian perfection through personal prayer. They are looking for times and methods which will enable them to come closer to God.

The responses indicate that the respondents have learned prayer according to a typical discipline. They do not tend to accept the prayers of other religions⁵ - the old religions prayed for national security and peace, as Christian churches have prayed. They are not yet open enough toward other religions. This is cause for denomination-ism and factionalism. It reveals that it would be hard to effectualize ecumenical affairs with mutual cooperation among churches in Korea. These facts were proved in the precious statement that our prayer life has been rooted in conservative Christian faith.

⁵Dunnam suggests that everyone prays. He defines prayers in the broad sense; A cry for help, The deepest human desire, Peak moments of life, and Conscious communion with God. His definitions are applicable to other religions, too.

b) Group dimension. The results reveal that the respondents are not accustomed to corporate prayer. They have some tendencies to consider prayer as an individual practice. The results indicate that they still lack a sense of corporation. God calls them into a relationship with someone. The Gospel of John shows us Christ's prayer emphasizing oneness, "I pray that they may all be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me (John 17:21)." They are the people of togetherness, but they must open their minds wide enough to be receptive to others. Praying aloud is typical in the Korean church. It is a rare phenomenon in the course of worship in American churches. One response shows that some people are losing their confidence in praying aloud in public, probably because they are living outside of the native country.

One thing that people have to incorporate into their prayers is the knowledge that prayer is also listening to God. God sometimes wants them to listen in order to make their prayers real. They are often required to be silent to hear the small voice. In order to know God's will, one should not always return to the prayers of the Bible but should hear the prayers of the neighbors.

Prayers happen between the speaker and the hearer. Prayer is a language for speaking to God. If our prayers are not addressed to God, they are not prayers. Dr. Jennings discusses a sense of God's absence, along this line, in his article.

"The most astonishing aspect of prayer, though the one most likely to be forgotten, is that it is speaking to God. Prayer is not giving ourselves a "pep talk," nor is it a liturgical form for talking to ourselves. If we speak only to ourselves, we hear only echoes. Prayer has nothing to do with this echo chamber. It is speaking to, calling for God; it is focused not upon ourselves but upon God."⁶

c) Corporate dimension. Most respondents say that prayer, along with worship, is a very important aspect of Christian life. But the results reveal that they do not know how to make prayer real in the worship experience. Their understandings of worship are colored with cultural flavors. They demand to explore new meanings of Christian worship. At the present time, there are two elements that create tension in Christian worship in Korea; one can be traced to the Confucian type of worship, which is very conventional. It respects forms and follows rules without passions as the Pharisees did. The other comes from the revival type of worship that is very emotional. It values spirits and ignores traditions. The Korean church is expected to create new liturgical forms to answer both elements and enrich our Christian life.

Prayer, along with worship, should direct them to feel confidence in dealing with the worship experience and daily life. They have experienced the bipolarity between sacredness and profanity.

⁶Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., "Prayer: The call for God," Christian Century, 98 (April 15, 1981) 410.

They face a problem: how would they be able to revive and refresh their liturgical languages, so that liturgical prayer can be incarnated into their lives?

The score in the yes blank is lower in comparison with the other dimensions. It shows that there is a need to make corporate prayer more effective in the course of worship. Corporate prayer refers to the prayer of the gathered congregation. It should be expressed through adoration, confession, thansgiving and supplication. Dr. Jennings expresses the value of public prayer incorporated into the worship service. He can give some ideas of prayer in the context of worship.

"Praying in public serves the purpose of teaching people how to pray. The public prayer of the congregation is the model for all prayer. Congregational prayer is not therefore a promiscuous display of the essentially secret action of prayer; it is instead the formation of prayer, the summarizing of prayer."⁷

d) World dimension. Most respondents indicated that intercessory prayer was an important aspect of prayer life and that they have practiced it. Due to the separation between South Korea and North Korea, they have been taught to pray for the reunification of the nation. Even though they are forced to live outside of Korea, they have been praying for their native country. In some ways their prayer is so desperate because their immediate families have remained

⁷Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., Life as Worship (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 3.

in Korea; that is parents and other relatives.

They expect to experience growth through the practice of intercessory prayer. They are looking for a better understanding of intercession in order to enrich their prayer life. They are not aware of world situations. They have to open their minds toward the changing world where their hands are needed. They have to be taught that they are members of the world family. The results show that they are not fully aware of the need of an organization or a center which is able to take care of them, but they are open to having an organizational center for prayer made available to them.

Christ's prayer in the Gospel of John (chapter 17) will be a lesson from which they can learn about intercessory prayer. Maxie Dunnam says, in his workbook, regarding intercession, "Intercession transforms strangers into friends. All the petitions of Christ from the disciples have the salvation of the world as their ultimate aim. Keep them, sanctify them, unite them, and fill them with love so that the world may believe. Therefore, prayer for the Body of Christ is not limited to the church but creates a church which can give a convincing witness to the world. The church affects the world to the degree that this prayer is answered for it."⁸

Respondents indicated that they were ready to become participants in intercessory prayer if there is a need. That may mean that they can help and be helped if there is an agency to

⁸Dunnam, 44.

facilitate this matter. Intercessory prayer is one serious dimension that they should develop in order to broaden their understanding of Christian prayer.

2) Responses to Questions 21-30

(21) The writer had expected that prayer, itself, might be a problem to them. Surprisingly enough, the corresponding answers were checked "no." Because of practicing prayer they thought that they had not had the problem.

(22) The responses prove absolutely that respondents feel that prayer is possible anytime and anywhere. If these responses demand further explanation, they can be discussed within "prayerful life."

(23) An affirmative answer was not high. This may indicate that respondents believe that prayer may not call for action. This response needs an answer: prayer without action can be a mental prayer, but it cannot be a Christian prayer. A commitment and determination in prayer are requisite to the Christian life.

(24) The respondents don't care about the length of the prayer. It is believed that if one is speaking to God, nobody can interfere. On reflecting about the limited length of the worship service, public prayer should be sensitive to this limited time.

(25) Positively, they expect their prayers should have responses. These attitudes might create dangerous situations if prayers were not answered. People sometimes need time to listen to another person's

prayers.

(26) Meditation and contemplation are not indispensable ways to come to God. Because they know the prayers of other religions, they resist them. They should be open to accept meditation and contemplation as ways to come closer to God.

(27) They feel no need for additional materials to improve their prayer life. This shows that the Bible is a satisfactory tool in composing prayers. It indicates that they already know how to pray.

(28) They have less opportunities in areas of prayer training. This indicates that they have learned prayers by participating in all types of worship services. They need to learn prayers more systematically in the light of spirituality.

(29) They are definitely expecting to have programs concerning prayer and prayer life in order to gain spiritual enrichment. They strongly anticipate some programs which will be made available within their churches.

(30) Most respondents are not willing to say, "yes," to the need for an early morning prayer session. This indicates that their situation in America is different from what they experienced in Korea. There is a need for the development of new prayer programs which are appropriate for the Korean Christians living in the United States.

D. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Responses to the questionnaire have affirmed the fact that our understandings and attitudes concerning prayer were rooted in our

heritages. The respondents are very strong advocates of private prayer. Their desire for improving private prayer was the major concern. The writer has learned, however, that their understanding of prayer should be reshaped in the light of biblical references and theologies. The respondents were limited in their understanding of the prayers of other religions.

The writer has found that to pray aloud is still no strange thing in small groups or in churches. This means that respondents inherited a legacy of "contemporaneous prayer," which is still a popular tool in asking God for help. That was the way they began to learn praying and to have confidence in prayer. The results have shown that a life of prayer was reinforced in the course of worship. Prayer activities always bring forth the dimension of worship in Korea. Thus prayer and worship cannot be separated from one another in the life of the church; however, an understanding of worship was conditioned by cultural contexts. There are many factors that have been unconsciously accepted as traditional rituals in developing Christian worship. There are other topics that one can seriously deal with. There is a feeling that worship should be turned toward the essence of Christian worship.

The writer has found that intercession for the nation and for peace are still practiced. These people are strong advocates of intercessory prayer. Their intercession, however, does not seem to go beyond their interests. They want to refresh their understanding of intercession based upon Jesus' prayers of intercession. From the

statement made by T. Jennings, they can learn some essences of intercessory prayer.

"We pray not only for our own needs but in intercession for the needs of our neighbors, our sisters, our brothers, our earth. In this act we give voice to the cry of our world for God, not only in general but also in particular. We do this because we know that what we need at heart is no different from the need of our neighbor and our world, and because we know we can never get what we need alone or apart from our neighbor's crying and groaning. For what we need is not the salvation of our own soul but the new heaven and new earth, the reign and rule of God."⁹

The results of the last 10 questions came out as the writer expected. Respondents have an idea, acquired in Korea, that conditions their understanding of prayer. There are many indications that they cannot follow the same prayer life in the United States: for example, the early morning prayer session.

They are exclusively practicing meditation and contemplation in the churches. They should know that these were traditional in the Christian church.¹⁰ They may find the opportunities for self-examination and clear perception by using meditative and contemplative prayer. J. Moltmann tried to distinguish between meditation and

⁹Jennings, "Prayer," 412.

¹⁰Jürgen Moltmann gives a spiritual ladder like this in his book; action and meditation---meditation and contemplation---contemplation and mystical union. Jürgen Moltmann, Experience of God (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

contemplation.¹¹

Finally, it would be interesting to compare this study with those conducted with other ethnic groups, using similare questionnaires. Korean Christians are welcome to use any kind of prayer programs; for example, workshops and retreats. In the following chapters the writer will formulate a theology of prayer and suggest some strategies for learning Christian prayer, using ideas from the above chapters. The writer will pay particular attention to neglected and ignored elements which may broaden our perspectives on prayer life.

¹¹Ibid., 62. The writer would like to refer to his discussion. "For my own practical purposes I would define meditation as being the loving, suffering, and participating knowledge of something; and contemplation as the reflective awareness of one's own self in this meditation. The meditating person submerges himself in the object of his meditation. He is absorbed in the contemplation of it. He 'forgets himself'. The object is submerged in him. In contemplation he recollects himself once more. He becomes conscious of the changes in himself. He comes back to himself, having gone out of himself and forgotten himself. In meditation we become aware of the object. In the contemplation that is bound up with it we become aware of our awareness."

CHAPTER IV

A THEOLOGY OF PRAYER REFORMULATED

A. INTRODUCTION

Everyone prays. What, then is the meaning of prayer? Prayer is a cry to God for help. We often have not recognized this cry as prayer. Everyone asks for what they desire, "O God! What am I going to do? How can I make it? Help me!" We have heard such utterances made by Christians and non-Christians. People tend to reach for someone or something beyond themselves in times of deep distress: for example, in death, tragedy, and loss.

In this chapter the writer is going to theorized a theology of prayer on the basis of suffering. Suffering not only draws us to God, but also helps us pray. Suffering brings Koreans to seek God and ask Him for strength to continue in the midst of hardships. It is one of the biblical and theological themes that most Christians have to struggle with.

"God is revealed to us because He suffered and because we suffer; because He suffers He demands our love, and because we suffer He gives us his love, and He covers our anguish with the eternal and infinite anguish. Suffering is the substance of life and the root of personality, for it is only suffering that makes us persons. And suffering is universal, suffering is that which unites all us living beings

together."¹

The more we sense suffering the closer we are drawn to God as well as to prayer. Howard Thurman praises suffering because it can give us growth and freedom.

"Does it have a function? What would life be like if there were no suffering? No pain? The startling discovery is made that if there were no suffering, there would be no freedom. Why do men suffer? They suffer as a part of the experience of freedom. They suffer as a part of the growth of life itself."²

Suffering can be found in fear and anxiety in our daily life. Fear and anxiety are psychological and philosophical expressions of other aspects of suffering. We exhibit them in the context of suffering in order for prayer to be real. Along with suffering and fear, Metz identified another type of prayer, "prayer of fear."

"Praying is not an imaginary ladder enabling us to escape from our fears. Nor does it suppress or overcome our fears. First and foremost it permits fear ----- Fear is allowed in, not banished. Fear, sorrow, and distress can easily provide the impetus to pray. Apathy has no part to play in prayer. The aim of prayer is not to protect us from pain or suffering."³

¹Miguel De Unamuno, Tragic Sense of Life (New York: Dover, 1954) 204-205.

²Howard Thurman, Disciplines of the Spirit (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1977) 80-81.

³Johann Metz, The Courage to Pray (New York: Crossroad, 1981) 15.

We also pray in times of joy and peace. Everyone experiences rare and precious moments in life. We can also be aware of His presence at those times. We thank God spontaneously from our hearts. In these experiences, prayer is natural. In the moments of fulfillment, our prayers go with gratitude and praise. This type of prayer is not conscious and deliberate, but it is a prayer, nonetheless.

When we are joyous and peaceful, our prayers might become less frequent, because we, as human beings, have a tendency to forget about God's help. When we are suffering and in despair our prayers become real, because we have a tendency to pray earnestly in crisis.

We see persons who praise and thank God in times of suffering. We also see persons who confess and supplicate in the midst of anguish. We pray when we are in need. It is more compelling for us to look forward to God when we are desperate. The writer is convinced that the more we can sense suffering and pain, the more we can pray. Thus prayer and suffering are closely related to each other in our lives. Here, in this chapter, the writer is going to attempt to formulate theology of prayer based upon suffering.

B. BIBLICAL BASES OF PRAYER

1) The prayer of Job

There is a cry from the righteous over God in the book of Job. The righteous one begins to suffer without an understandable reason. Suddenly he begins to lose family, property, and health. Even worse,

he feels that he is separated from God.

In the earliest stage of Israelite faith, suffering was interpreted as divine punishment for sin. The Israelites were firmly convinced that, while the wicked might prosper for a long while, God's righteous judgment would eventually reach them (See Job 21:28-33). It would be meaningful to see the way Job handles the difficulties. "But he is different from ancient and modern pagans because he clings to his belief in a just and omnipotent deity. Were he to yield to unbelief, his problem would immediately cease to exist. His physical and moral grappling with undeserved evil would remain, but his spiritual torture would end."⁴

For Job, the world has collapsed. His pain is unutterable. Nevertheless, he begins to converse with God. The first bitter thing he brings forth is a curse for the day of his birth (3:2 ff). His suffering, throughout the Book, is expressed in an up-and-down movement, a conflict between denial and affirmation, doubt and certainty, and revolt and acceptance. His suffering destroys his will to live. Job is already on the far side of lament and supplication. Here are the desperate speeches that Job utters to implore God's help. "I cry to thee and thou dost not answer me; I stand, and thou dost not heed me. Thou hast turned cruel to me; with the might of thy hand thou dost persecute me. Thou liftest me up on the wind, thou makest me ride on it, and thou tосsest me about in the roar of the storm, Yea, I know

⁴Samuel Terrien, "Job: Introduction," in Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954) 3:898-899.

that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living."⁵

In the dialogue of Job with friends and God, we find wisdom which interweaves his experiences and theological reflections with intensity. We can draw a pattern of prayer from his speeches that one may call this type of prayer, dialogical prayer. True prayer, in some ways, is a dialogue between God and persons. "True dialogue involves complaint and question. According to Ellul, 'a dialogue implies reserve, tension, contradiction, argument back and forth.' This is conspicuously apparent in Jeremiah 12:1 (GNB): Lord, if I argued any case with you, you would prove to be right. Yet I must question you about matters of justice. Why are wicked men so prosperous? Why do dishonest men succeed?"⁶

In the book of Job, earnestly talking with God becomes a prayer. We seek God's help through prayer, which, in turn, makes us aware of our new dimension of suffering.

2) The prayer of psalms

Unlike the prayer of the book of Job, the prayer of lamentation from the Psalter are constructive. The person praying still has hope of escaping the underworld. The author of chapter 139 dāres

⁵Job 30:20-23 (RSV).

⁶Donald G. Bloesch, The Struggle of Prayer (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) 53.

to address the Lord, "If I ascend to heaven thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, thou are there!" The psalter, as a whole, concerns itself with life's present problems. The psalmists look primarily into the future world, free from sickness, evil, and enemies.

Some of the psalmists anticipate the time when the Lord will restore the fortunes of his people (14:7, 53:6, 126:4). A number of psalmists reveal the ways God passes judgment in history or at the end of the age. The essential elements of ritual are found in the context of worship. These elements are expressed as prayers in the book of psalms: "the rites of sacrifice and purification, the prayers of the sufferer, and the liturgist's pronouncement of healing."⁷

People try to buttress evil by the power of God, while evils try to go away from God. There are numerous references to evils in the book of psalms. Indeed the book has lengthy lists of evils expressed through personal or corporate prayer.

"Evils that are particularly frequently mentioned are the inclemency of nature, diseases, want, distress, calamity, toil, hardship, hopeless situation, weakness, corruptibility, futility, insults, defamations, enmity, injustice, oppression, persecution, and sins, but also the state of mind created by these evils e.g., hunger, thirst, sorrow, fear, anxiety, despair. Major calamities are often described by images of cosmic catastrophes, such as rushing water, the sea, earthquakes, tempest, fire, darkness, and the extinction of the stars."⁸

⁷Erhard S. Gerstenberger and Wolfgang Schrage, Suffering (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980) 124.

⁸O. A. Piper, "Suffering and evil," in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980) 4:450.

Among many prayers in the book of psalms, Chapter 6 is a prayer for mercy during trouble, "Depart from me, all you workers of evil; for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord accepts my prayer. All my enemies shall be ashamed and sorely troubled; they shall turn back, and be put to shame in a moment."⁹

The psalms also show the suffering petitioner who, in the midst of prayer, directly addresses his adversaries as though they were present. The adversaries afflict the people, but are not a decisive power to dissolve the righteous' life. The sufferer learns that the trouble is not forgotten, but is recognized as a precondition for God's coming to save. When a sufferer, in the midst of his or her pain and uncertainty, can sigh, as does the suppliant of psalms, then the sufferer assimilates that situation to himself and thereby becomes more mature.

"The numerous expressions of trust that appear in the prayer of lamentation point in the same direction (cf. Pss. 22:1-3; 23; 31:1-4). Because everything comes from Yahweh's hand, suffering is an intermediate station on the way to a more intensive fellowship with Him."¹⁰

Suffering, in the Psalms, has some transforming power to develop more mature Christians. Suffering draws us to God and helps

⁹Psalms 6:8-10 (RSV).

¹⁰Gerstenberger, 126-127.

us to discern right and wrong through the prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, and supplication.

3) Jesus' prayer

Christian prayer begins with Jesus' teaching on prayer. In the Gospels Jesus was known and remembered as a man of prayer. Jesus arose and went to pray early in the morning (Mark 1:35), and also spent the night in prayer before he chose the twelve disciples (Luke 6:12-13). He not only knew the Jewish practice of prayer but also practiced it in his life. Further, he recreated and renewed the Jewish prayer.

"There are twenty-one recorded instances of his prayer life in the four Gospels and twenty-one that report his teachings on the subject of prayer."¹¹

We find that Jesus prayed at critical moments, as reported most frequently in the Gospel of Mark. The cornerstone of all prayer in the Bible is the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane, where surrender is addressed to his Father (Mark 14:36). He earnestly prayed in the mountain before his arrest and prayed on the Cross, too. Mark says that Jesus, "began to be greatly distressed and troubled," while Matthew says that he, "began to be sorrowful and troubled." He confessed, "My soul is very sorrowful even to death." Then comes another petition, "Father, all things are possible for thee; remove

¹¹Fred Fisher, Prayer in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964) 27.

this cup from me" (Mark 14:35). God does not hear his son's prayer. It is to be called, "the unanswered prayer." Jesus faced, on the Cross, the greatest and the final fear and suffering. It is a right description, as Thomson points out, in Jesus' practice of prayer. "Our lord's experience in the Garden is of profound significance for the study of His doctrine and practice of prayer. Here in Gethsemane He shows, not by word but by act, what real prayer is. Real prayer is absolute self-surrender to and absolute correspondence with the mind, the will, the character of God."¹²

Jesus felt desperate on the Cross. Then he cried out, "My God, my god, why hast thou forsaken me (Psalm 22:1)?" His last words were also a prayer, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit (Luke 23:46)." His prayers were frequently derived from the scripture, for example, Psalm 42:5 ff with present anguish and confident hope.

The vicarious and redemptive suffering of Jesus is a great example that can help us to grow to be mature Christians. Jesus' crises, in Gethsemane or on the Cross, can be our prayers in this troublesome world. In Jesus' prayer we find the power and will of God to deliver, not only himself, but also his followers, from all kinds of suffering.

What, then, is the pattern of prayer that Jesus has inherited? Jesus follows the prophetic tradition in terms of His heart-felt petition, as well as thanksgiving. In Heiler's typology there are two

¹²James Thomson, The Praying Christ (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) 43.

types of prayer, "mystical" and "prophetic". Jesus shows us more a prophetic than mystical prayer.

"Prophetic prayer is voluntary and spontaneous, but it is at the same time from the heart; it involves the whole being of the petitioner as he expresses deeply felt yearnings and groanings within him that have their source and ground in the Spirit of God. Prophetic prayer in the true sense is rare and difficult, for it commands the whole attention of the petitioner, and it arises out of a deep-felt distress and need as well as a daring faith."¹³

4) Paul and prayer

When Saul of Tarsus became the Apostle of Paul, he encountered many obstacles in his life and mission. It is reported that he was beaten, imprisoned, stoned, and chased from city to city. He felt great fear and trembling when he was invited to join the Roman Christians. He asked them, "join with me in the struggle by your prayer to God (Romans 15:30)."

Besides the hardship of carrying the Apostolic ministry, he had to suffer his illness, "a thorn in the flesh." He prays three times to the Lord to get rid of his handicap (II. Cor. 12:8). Paul said this: "why won't you remove my thorn, God? I will certainly be a better servant for you without it!" Later he realized that the thorn could strengthen him, spiritually. Paul continued to explain why the thorn

¹³Blöesch, 42-43.

Lord gave him the handicap in II Corinthians (12:7 ff); "and to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations. That is obviously why the Lord would not remove it."

Paul urges us to pray continually for all things, in all circumstances (I Thess. 5:17).¹⁴ Paul also speaks of joy and peace which are not natural outcomes. They are given by the Lord in midst of suffering and anxiety (Phil. 14:4-6). He was aware that we are too much concerned with worldly things. He sensed that such anxieties would bring grief, which leads to death. He asked us to maintain unceasing prayer for the troubled society.

Paul's troubled ministry can be seen in his suffering and persecution for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. We can see Christian prayer in the life of Paul. We know that his prayer was offered in the midst of his suffering.

Finally Paul's prayer has helped us to see Christian prayer more broadly. His prayers, which appear in his letters, prove to us that the Spirit becomes our mediator (Romans 8:26). We sense that his prayer is addressed to the Trinity.¹⁵

C. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

1) The nature of God

¹⁴The verses I Thess. 5:16-18 are to be the writer's life-long lesson since he has been in the U.S. These verses motivate him to explore what Christian prayer is all about.

¹⁵David M. Stanley, Boasting in the Lord (New York: Paulist Press, 1973) 181-182. He pointed out that Paul's prayer be in trinitarian character in its dynamic.

Prayer means speaking to God, to whom we bring our need, our lack, and our emptiness. It is easy to forget the truth, that prayer is not speaking to ourselves, but to God. If we speak only to ourselves, the results are only echoes; so prayer should not be addressed to ourselves, but to God. In a real sense, prayer depends on a prior activity of God.

To which God do we speak? This is still the puzzling problem that we have to take into consideration. There are many people who pray either to some private deity or to the great magician, as when our prayers are directed to an idol. If so, we have no reason to complain that they are empty. Who, then shall we call God? When Jesus was in the mountain of Gethsemane and in the hill of Golgotha, he prayed to God, God of suffering. We believe that the suffering God encompasses our suffering when we are in pain. God revealed himself when Jesus was in moments of crisis, particularly on the Cross.

"God suffers in each and all of us, ----- and we all suffer in him. Religious anguish is nought but divine suffering, the feeling that God suffers in me and that I suffer in Him."¹⁶

The nature of a philosophical god, which is represented as apathetic, immobile, unmoved, different from suffering God, was revealed in Jesus Christ. Alfred Whitehead proposes a solution for the abstract, apathetic God. Whitehead sees two natures of God; primordial and consequent. The primordial nature of God can be expressed as infinite,

¹⁶Unamuno, 227.

abstract, and immutable, while the consequent nature of divinity is finite, temporal, conscious, and conditioned by the progress of the world. He opens new direction of the understanding of God in a way which can enlarge our perception of God. He perceives that God can be a fellow sufferer who understands.

"God can give us fresh insights into the value of suffering. He is our ideal friend who takes what is lost up into his own nature, turning evil into good. God knows evil, pain, degradation, but only as overcome by good."¹⁷

Pain makes us humans turn to God. Human pain is valueless unless it is related to divine pain. Though our pains shake our faith in God, God helps us through His pain. God saves us through His Agape love rooted in pain.

"Our pain unites us with God in Christ and is turned into joy. We have died, but we will live (I Peter 4:13). In the mysteries of pain we become immediately at one with God. The mystery of the Cross creates power for sanctification. United with God's pain, our pain heals our sins."¹⁸

God suffers before we do. He has already participated in our suffering. Because God participates in our suffering, we suffer with Him. Moreover God still suffers with us, despite the fact that we fail to join in His suffering. We suffer no longer, but God suffers in us

¹⁷James A. Mohler, The Sacrament of Suffering (Notre Dame: Fides/Claretian, 1979) 113.

¹⁸Ibid., 117.

and gives us meaning to our suffering if we are His sons and daughters; so our suffering becomes a divine suffering. The suffering of God is best discussed in a book by Kazoh Kitamori.¹⁹ He perceives suffering to be of God's essence. The pain of God in his scheme is the pain of Christ on the Cross. God sent his beloved Son to suffer and die for our sins.

"Redemptive love is a suffering love. So the Cross is necessary suffering. God not only suffers intensively in Christ to overcome the power of evil, but suffers continually as long as there is evil in the world."²⁰

2) The nature of Holy Spirit

Prayer is grounded, not only in God the Father and God the Son, but also in God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit moves us to pray and instructs us in the life of prayer. We see the disciples of Christ filled with the Holy Spirit, for they testify and to whom they pray with power and boldness. Jesus promises, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you (Acts 1:8)."

St. Paul found discouragement, temptations, and suffering in his lifetime. He could be a free man because he longed to keep the Holy Spirit. Bloesch gives a general explanation of the Holy Spirit as related to the scriptural basis of prayer.

¹⁹As an Asian theologian, he might be impacted by Buddhism. In the light of Buddhism life is suffering. The buddhistic believers say that the Buddha's mercy can absorb human sickness. The buddhistic prayer is focused to illumine suffering and to expel it. On the contrary Christian prayer is focused to accept suffering and to transform it. Kazoh Kitamori, Theology of the Pain of God (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965).

²⁰Ibid., 122.

"It is the Holy Spirit who unites us with the living Christ and thereby enables us to enter into a living communion with him. It is the Spirit who prays for us and with us (Rom. 8:15-16). He teaches us how to pray, for we do not know how to pray as we ought (Rom. 8:26). He is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord (Isa. 11:2)."²¹

The Holy Spirit, in Hebrew, is feminine in gender, but the Judeo-Christian tradition has used the masculine concept of deity. The nature of God has been cited as an absolute and dominating figure. He plans, executes, manipulates, and overrules creation in an intellectual way. There is no room in Him for such feminine attributes as intuition, affection, contingency, and non-rationalism.

"I believe the best-solution is to see the Holy Spirit as the feminine principle in the trinity. In providing the initiating aim of each instance of becoming, she is the womb of creation. Her patience and persistence in urging, but never compelling."²²

The traditional idea of impassibility could not be responsive to our existence, but in process theology God can voluntarily limit Himself in exercising His powers in the world. God gives up spontaneity and freedom to meet His purposes.

"Because of his voluntary self-limitation the Holy Spirit respects our freedom. Indeed the gift and conferring of freedom are the most

²¹Bloesch, 37-38.

²²Bonnell Spencer, God who Dares to be Man (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) 138.

characteristic works of the Spirit in the New Testament."²³

The freedom which Jesus gave is freedom for the whole person. Jesus began his public ministry with a pronouncement of freedom, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to announce release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."²⁴

In order to be free, ourselves, from selfishness, sin, and sanction, The Holy Spirit fights for us and in us in the world. After Pentecost she entered the church. She implies the continual manifestation of God's compassionate suffering. She is aware of our feelings and has knowledge of what our feelings are. She is a mediator between humans and God, just as Jesus is. The suffering of the Holy Spirit is also the pain of the Father and the Son. This is the prototype of the mystical body. If one suffers, all suffer.

3) Prayer and holiness

In the Bible, God is the holy One of Israel. The holiness of God demands a corresponding, responsive holiness in men and women, "You shall be holy because the Lord your God is holy (Lev. 19:1)." Jesus is also the holy servant. The word 'holy' is used in the New Testament in referring to the scriptures (Rom. 1:2). Christians are often described as 'holy saints' in the Acts and Epistles.

²³H.F. Woodhouse, "Pneumatology and process theology," Scottish Journal of Theology, 25 (November 1972) 387.

²⁴Luke 4:18-19.

Christians, then, are called to live in holiness. Holiness is not the same as perfection, and Christian life is certainly progressive in holiness. The nature of holiness is to recognize the activity of God in people; so the life of prayer cannot be separated from the life of holiness. The office of prayer is not only to bring growth in Christ, but also to force one to live in holiness.

"The Epistles stress growth and movement toward maturity, toward the fulfillment of Christ (Eph. 3:16-19). But growth involves pain and anguish of spirit. The path of self-knowledge and self-scrutiny calls for a willingness to endure deprivation and inner suffering."²⁵

In the life of holiness and prayer we need some guidance, especially spiritual guidance. We must be someone with an ability to love others and share their sufferings. We should be, of course, persons of discipline and discernment. The Spanish Franciscan, St. Peter of Alcantara (1499-1562), suggests guidance on the discipline of prayer in the light of the holy life:²⁶

- A. If you need to move on to another subject, do so.
- B. Avoid too much intellectualism, using more the affections and the will.
- C. Do not be too violent or emotional, but practice rather a 'simple subdued gaze.'
- D. Avoid the two extremes of fatigue and slackness.
- E. Be patient. If prayer does not come, 'change, for the time, prayer

²⁵Kenneth Leech, True prayer (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980)
39.

²⁶Ibid., 55.

into study.'

- F. Do not spend too short a time, but allow adequate time for prayer to develop.
- G. If you are 'visited by God' and prayer is aroused, stay in prayer, and do not then revert to books.
- H. Try to unite meditation with contemplation.

Meditation is focused primarily on our state of mind wherein dwells the image of God.²⁷ There we try to experience the presence of God. We cannot deny the fact that meditation is one kind of prayer. In the process of meditation there are crucial moments for silence. Though we will deal with silence in terms of the practical aspect of prayer, we will see here, what the nature of silence is in relation to the life of holiness.

Silence can be both a destructive and creative force in our lives. There is a silence which crushes people, a silence of hatred, a silence filled with fear and terror. There is also a creative silence which is a part of prayer. In silent prayer we can listen with the help of the Holy Spirit. Prayer, in this sense, is a gift, a grace. Silent prayer sometimes brings us to the step which leads from meditation to a mystical union. It is often called the moment of fulfillment or the ecstasy of union. Our language has no expression for this situation, so we are silent. The mystical experience can be heightened in the moments of suffering. The deeper the fellowship we

²⁷The writer introduced the difference between meditation and contemplation cited by J. Moltmann in Chapter two above.

have in suffering, the more surely we share in Christ's presence.

"Eckhart's remark that suffering is the shortest way to the birth of God in the soul applies, not to any imagined suffering, but to the very real sufferings endured by 'the witness to the truth.' God in the cell, God in the interrogation, God in the torture, God in the body's agony, God in that spiritual derangement which is the dark night of the soul - all this is the mystic experience of the martyr."²⁸

Through the mysticism that is centered in Christ, the remembrance of Christ's suffering is kept alive. Mysticism should not be estranged from action. Rather it is a preparation for discipleship in the life of holiness. Mysticism and discipleship belong together for the holiness of life in Jesus Christ.

4) Understanding of prayer

(a) D. Bonhoeffer. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was not only a man of prayer but also a man of action. His understanding of prayer was expressed in helping students and in ministering in the church, the House of Brethren. Perry LeFevre summarized three possibilities within the life of Bonhoeffer. He says, "renunciatory, active work for our neighbor, prayers of intercession, and lastly the mutual granting of forgiveness of sins in God's name."²⁹

He insists that prayer cannot be one's own. Prayer must be

²⁸Jürgen Moltmann, Experience of God (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) 72.

²⁹Perry LeFevre, Understanding of prayer (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981) 77.

the church's prayer. Bonhoeffer sees the person as a worker for others, so his prayer is naturally focused on intercession. He writes, "When pray intercession for the other, I move into the other's place. I really enter into the other man, into his guilt and his distress; I am afflicted by his sins and his affliction."³⁰

Bonhoeffer stresses learning what prayer is and reading the Bible. He entered into silent meditation each morning on the basis of scriptural texts. While he was in Finkenwalde, England, he developed his own model of the practice of prayer. There he produced a small book, Life together, which taught how to pray and meditate in the Christian community. In order to enhance his spirituality, he liked to use the Psalms and the Lord's prayers. The Psalms, a hymn, and common prayer were used every morning and night.

He demands that Christians must have time alone for scriptural meditation, prayer, and intercession. For him the word of the scripture is a very important guide in the life of prayer.

"Prayer means nothing else but the readiness and willingness to receive and appropriate the Word, and what is more, to accept it in one's personal situation, particular tasks, decisions, sins, and temptations."³¹

In the course of scriptural meditation, he listens and hears God's voice. He urges us to open ourselves to the hear of fellow Christians, and to hear their groanings.

³⁰Ibid., 78.

³¹Ibid., 87.

"Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians, because these Christians are talking where they should be listening. He who can no longer listen to his brother will soon be no longer listening to God either; he will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God too. This is the beginning of the death of the spiritual life, and in the end there is nothing left."³²

(b) J. Cobb. The understanding of prayer has been changed as J. Cobb has been searching for spiritual discipline. He recognized that prayer must be of self-evident importance as a mode of expressing one's deepest concerns. He found out later that what he had practiced in terms of religious discipline was but one form of discipline. He says that he has begun to be aware of another dimension of prayer about which we should be concerned. It could be called a social perspective of prayer. This is one strong dimension of prayer that we can find in Jesus' teaching. Jesus demands social obligations of justice before prayer in the context of worship.

"So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."³³

It is true, in some ways, that prayer is not saying something.

³²Leech, 49-50.

³³Matthew 5:23-24.

There is not a person of prayer who says only Lord, and Lord, please God. Rather, that person would give a cup of cold water to the thirsty.

"Jesus' attack on pharisaical piety indicates that he destroyed prayer as comfort. The descriptions of Jesus in prayer are not descriptions of a person in pietistic comfort complete with air-conditioned breezes and velvet cushions. His prayers take place amid groanings and sweatings of blood and shedding of tears and wrestling with evil spirits - in his retreat to the desert, in the Garden of Gethsemane before his death, on the cross of death, at the tomb of his dead friend Lazarus. Far from being comfortable, Jesus' prayer is accompanied by suffering or by extreme joy or anxiety."³⁴

John Cobb sees that the church begins to be weakened from spiritual hunger as well as from the distortion of images of God. He suggests that we need to perceive God in the light of incarnation - incarnation in which God affirmed and fulfilled the faculties of his creatures.

"I find God in the natural processes of my body, when these are not thwarted and impeded by external interferences. I find God in my feelings, when these are open and spontaneous. I find God in my reason, when this is drawn by truth rather than by the effort to justify myself."³⁵

³⁴Matthew Fox, On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear (New York: Paulist Press, 1972) 5-6.

³⁵John B. Cobb, Jr., To pray or not to pray (Nashville: Upper Room, 1974) 17.

Everyone prays. We are encouraged not only to ask what we need, but also to intercede for others. Cobb begins to accept the fact that prayer is not "ought" or "must" as commands. Rather, he insists that we may pray and we are free to pray.

"God permits us to bring to Him whatever concerns we have. The door is open. We need not devise means of breaking it down in order to gain access to Him. Once and for all, we should, in the name of Christ, reject all legalism with respect to prayer and especially all forms of spiritual discipline that are designed to wrest favors from God."³⁶

Along with Henry Wieman, Cobb sees prayer as mutual involvement. He emphasizes the human responsiveness toward God. Our desires can be fulfilled in God as God's desires can be fulfilled in man. He discusses prayer as follows:

"Prayer can be understood broadly to include the whole stance of openness to God and responsiveness to the divine call. This of primary importance ----- Prayer has its place as a specific practice of intensification of the Christian stance toward God."³⁸

³⁶Ibid., 22.

³⁷Henry Wieman has a more radical understanding of prayer than that of Cobb. He seems to have understood prayer as a human-centered point of view. Wieman traces prayer to the impulsive cries of need and joy. Prayer has its root in a spontaneous outreaching. It does not initially presuppose some invisible listener who can hear and respond. See, LeFevre, 53.

³⁸John B. Cobb, Jr., "Spiritual discernment in a Whiteheadian perspective," in Harry James Cargas and Bernard Lee (eds.) Religious Experience and Process Theology (New York: Paulist Press, 1976) 363.

D. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF PRAYER

1) Silence

In silence we first listen. Bodily composure and meditation will help in this work. The essential element in silence is "turning-inward". To be silent is an act of prayer, because being silent means to attend, to pay attention to another. Silence, in some ways, is an intense form of communication through which we can enter into communion with God. Silence in prayer is to bring thinking: thinking who we are in relation to God, and who we are called to become. Soren Kierkegaard explains silence in relation to prayer.

"In proportion as he became more and more earnest in prayer he had less and less to say, and in the end he became quite silent. He became silent - indeed what is, if possible, still more expressly the opposite of speaking, he became a hearer. He had supposed that to pray is to speak; he learned that to pray is not merely to be silent, but it is to be silent, and to remain silent, to wait, until the man who prays hears God."³⁹

We have dealt with meditation and contemplation. They usually happen in silence. To practice silent prayer effectively demands a certain period of training. The nature of silence has already been dealt with in the previous section; so it has been omitted at this point.

³⁹James E. Griffiss, A Silent path of God (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) 23.

There are possibly three steps that one may practice in daily life. First, one sits comfortably in order to pray. One closes one's eyes for relaxation. Second, one listens and concentrates, either on words of God or on spiritual references. Third, one may write meaningful insights that arise from the inner world.

2) Intercession

It is true that if you really love people, you can't help praying for them. We love some people and pray for them frequently. But Jesus commanded us, "Love you enemies, and pray for those who persecute you (Matt. 5:44)." We are to pray not only for those we love, but also for those we fear and for those who are our enemies. We are to pray not only for people, but also for causes, institutions and movements.

It is the will of the Father, our God, that we intercede for one another. Jesus' whole life was an intercessory prayer. The Scripture teaches us to intercede for all persons, especially those who believe in Christ (I Tim. 2:1). When we pray for other peoples we recognize that we are united with them. Their concern is our concern; their suffering is our suffering.

The prayer affects us and the persons we pray for, because we have the same concerns and sufferings. We can raise several questions in relation to intercessory prayer. How can I, as a weak and erring human being, influence God through my words? How does intercessory prayer work? How can I pray for others? How can I know what to ask of

God in their behalf? We should just start to pray for others before we answer the above questions. As we sense the needs of various groups of people in society, we come to pray for these people; the old, the distressed, the discouraged, and the hungry.

The nature of intercession includes petitions. Jesus first offered a petition for the removal of His suffering in that terrible hour when he knelt in the Garden on the Mount of Olives. The Gethsemane prayer thus begins with a genuine specific petition arising in a moment of urgent need. St. Paul asks us to include intercession and petition in our prayers.

"Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."⁴⁰

The difficulty comes when our most ardent petitions are not answered in the way we expect. Many persons become deeply troubled because their wishes fail. Jesus makes it clear that one must be willing to accept God's answer, even if that answer is different from one's own fervent desire. Jesus prayed earnestly in Gethsemane; "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; however, not as I will but as you will (Matt. 26:39)."

"Whatever form our intercession takes, however, the end is the same. We may offer specific petitions for material and temporal blessings, or

⁴⁰Philippians 4:6-7.

we may seek the spiritual riches of God's own life for others. A few persons go on to achieve a union of wordless adoration. But the end is always the will of God. The last word, spoken or unspoken, is that His will may be done. A continuous return to this pattern established by Jesus will save our prayer from descending to the level of magic."⁴¹

3) Eucharist

Jesus wants his disciples to pray sincerely and seriously. For prayers to be authentic, he shows us that they must relate to action. He is against hypocrisy in prayer. He does not believe in the multiplication of prayers - in the increase of their volume or frequency.

We see Jesus in prayer in the Eucharist. It was a prayer that was said at a meal. The ceremony was that of a Jewish festival that every family could celebrate. The first Eucharist was an event apart from synagogue or temple.

"For him it was so full of meaning that it was not necessary for him to offer it twice. We might even say that since he fulfilled what it symbolized by giving his life he could not offer it twice. It was his supreme prayer, symbol, and prelude to his total self-giving for the liberation of his people and eventually of all human."⁴²

⁴¹Edward W. Bauman, Intercessory prayer (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952) 83.

⁴²Tissa Balasuriya, The Eucharist and Human Liberation (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1977) 21.

The Eucharist was the supreme symbol of Jesus' self-offering into death. Prayers, in this sense, should be a kind of offering of our mind, heart, and materials. The eucharistic devotion was accordingly ritualized based upon the prayer of thanksgiving. There was a dialogue between Roman Catholics and Lutherans concerning the eucharistic prayers. Both agree that the celebration of the Eucharist is the church's sacrifice of praise and self-offering.

"By him, with him, and in him who is our great High Priest and Intercessor we offer to the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, our praise, thanksgiving and intercession with contrite hearts we offer ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice, a sacrifice which must be expressed in the whole of our daily lives."⁴³

What, then, is the spirit of the Eucharist? The Eucharist builds community, whereas our selfishness destroys people. It is universal; the world is racial and power is corruptable. Thus eucharistic prayers can empower the bereaved, the imprisoned, and the homeless. The Eucharist links the love of God and concern for others. It is made possible in Jesus Christ because His body and blood were given for others. Thus we need to remember continually the words of Jesus Christ in the eucharistic prayer, "Do this in remembrance of me."

4) Growth

Spiritual growth involves suffering. Growth is our Christian

⁴³John B. Ryan, The Eucharist prayer (New York: Paulist Press, 1974) 181.

commandment. It is at the heart of the way of prayer. It is possible, in a real sense, through self-discipline - one of the great needs of Christian life. Since discipline is so lacking in present-day homes and churches, we as Christians, should develop the proper discipline for spiritual enrichment. The practice of self-discipline must always be practical in our lives. It should be of a defined duration. For one week I will do so and so, or for one month I will not do so and so. "But more than this, self-discipline is prayer. Through mortification- this dying to self- we are offering our soul to God that he may fill the place self has vacated, and make us "holy as he is holy." That is why our self-discipline is to be a private affair, between us and God."⁴⁴

The Apostle Paul says, "For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. 6:8). A farmer is helpless to grow grain. All he can do is to provide the right conditions for the grain to grow. He puts the seed in the ground where natural forces take over and let the grain grow. This is the way with the spiritual life as a means of receiving His grace. The disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us. From this point of view, it would be proper to speak of the disciplines as the disciplined grace. Dietrich Bonhoeffer makes it clear in his book,

⁴⁴Constance Garrett, Growth in prayer (New York: Macmillan, 1953) 142.

The Cost of Discipleship (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961) that such grace is free, but it is not cheap.

Once we clearly understand that God's grace is unearnable, we just expect to open our minds to grow within His grace. This is a kind of discipline which can be practiced either individually or communally. Evelyn Underhill suggests self-denial as a discipline in time of crisis. It is related to mortification - a method of control of body and mind. She suggests:⁴⁵

- A. Quietly to suffer all crosses, difficulties, and contradictions to self-will whether internal or external, including temptations and dryness.
- B. Never to do or omit things on account of one's likes and dislikes, but to refer all to God's will.
- C. Those mortifications are right for us which increase humility and power of prayer and are performed with cheerful resolution.
- D. Habitual quietness of mind is essential to true mortification. All impetuosity and unquietness has in it some self-love, but the Holy Spirit is stillness, serenity, and peace.
- E. In general, the mortification sent by God and the ordinary friction of existence are enough to discipline our souls.

E. CONCLUSION

We have seen, in the books of Job and Psalms, suffering in

⁴⁵Ibid., 143.

proper relation to prayer. Desolation and despair are characteristics of the lives of Job and the Psalmists. Accordingly, their prayers are full of anguish and of struggle with depression and bitterness. The Israelites consider them adversaries and evils. Their suffering brings awareness of God's will towards them.

We tried to understand God in the perspective of process theology relevant to the suffering Christ. God can be suffered in Christ. The wounds of Christ are the way to reconcile God and us. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole and with his stripes we are healed."⁴⁶

Jesus' prayers had their climax in Gethsemane and on the Cross. His prayer give us many insights that can bring relevance to our spiritual life.

"Christian prayer then both finds its source in the Cross and also involves a sharing in the Cross, and this involves the sharing of pain and anguish. The Cross of Christ is not a problem to be understood, but a mystery into which we enter. In a sense the whole of Christian life is an experience of being plunged inwards to be a deep, yet increasingly simple and silent way of praying, with a strong sense of dwelling within the love of God and within the mystery of the Passion. This way of prayer is called contemplation."⁴⁷

⁴⁶Isaiah 53:5.

⁴⁷Leech, 151.

Though we have dealt with intercession, we have not dealt with it in relation to healing prayer. Christ endured suffering to the end that we could be healed through His pain. When we pray for others, we seek to bring their deepest needs to the healing of Christ. Intercession for healing the sick and troubled will be another field of the Christian ministry.⁴⁸

We have not considered prayer in the context of worship in this chapter. In the previous chapter, the writer pointed out that prayer and worship could not be separated in the Korean church. One of the dimensions we have dealt with is "prayer in worship." We cannot deny the fact that prayer and worship have continuity in the Christian life. Here is a definition of Christian worship given to us by James White. It gives us much insight into the understanding of Christian prayer.

"Christian worship is the deliberate act of seeking to approach reality at its deepest level by becoming aware of God in and through Jesus Christ and by responding to this awareness."⁴⁹

We have not yet covered methods of learning prayer within our situations. The next chapter will concentrate on lessons that could prove useful in the Korean church.

⁴⁸Ibid., 165-166. He introduces Father MacNutt's study of the healing ministry of prayer. Healing speaks of four basic prayer methods: prayer for repentance, for inner healing, for physical healing, and for deliverance.

⁴⁹James F. White, New Forms of Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971) 40.

CHAPTER V

A PLAN OF LEARNING PRAYER

A. THE CHRISTIAN PRAYER

The writer assumes that our understanding and attitude concerning prayer should be applicable to Christian prayer - the Christian prayer that is rooted in Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Old and New Testaments and worthy of response.

What, then, should Christian be? First we can find that there are many Christians who have misoriented prayer and have a childlike concept of prayer. A child lives in a world of asking; "I want, I need, you give."

"On the basis of Scripture I affirm that the "give me" prayer should be always subordinated to the "make me" prayer. The prodigal son, in Luke 15, first asked his father to give him a portion of the goods that were due him so that he could make his own way in the world (v.12). After he tried to make it on his own and failed, he returned to his father to plead; "make me as one of they hired servants (Luke 15:19 KJV)."¹

There are many short definitions of prayer. Prayer is a song, a silence, a breathing of a living soul. Prayer is waiting upon God. Here is an almost classic definition of prayer, which is found in the

¹Donald G. Bloesch, The Struggle of prayer (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) 76.

hymnal: prayer is the soul's sincere desire, unuttered or expressed. This definition is too simple and could lead to misunderstanding. As Georgia Harkness² pointed out, every sincere desire of the soul cannot always be a Christian prayer, such as a deep and ardent longing for another man's wife or position or property. So she urged us first to understand the Christian idea of God and man, in order that our prayer should be Christian prayer.

The writer has also defined prayer as the soul's cry to God for help. Socio-political situations have forced us to plead to God for help, so our prayer have been based upon these pleas. Our prayers are composed mainly of petitions instead of adoration and intercession. The Lord's prayer gives us an example of the importance of adoration. It contains petition, as well. We cannot ignore the need for petition in prayer. The writer reviewed the books of Job and Psalms, which were strongly petitionary in character. Petitionary prayers are found in the Prophets, too.

"The most authentic type of prayer is humble supplication, the pouring out of the heart before God. Such prayer reveals our absolute dependence on God, our total helplessness apart from God."³

²Georgia Harkness, Prayer and the Common Life (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1929) 30-36. She introduced the Westminster Shorter Catechism in which she said the best definition of prayer was expressed. It is worthwhile to examine it; "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies.

³Bloesch, 75.

Petitionary prayers culminated in the Garden of Gethsemane in the life of Jesus. He began to battle with His Father. He did not meekly submit, but pleaded for his life. Finally he surrendered to the will of his Father, after striving to change His will.

We have discussed the fact that Christian prayer should be based upon the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. We know that Jesus was the man of prayer in the New Testament. He prayed morning, afternoon, and evening, as do the pious Jews. Sometimes we are confused in regard to the attitudes of His prayers. He respected the prayer and piety of his ancestors. He used the Psalms explicitly. He enjoyed going to the temple to pray to God, his Father. Jesus never says a word against the Temple, rather he calls it, "house of prayer," and "the house of God."

Is Jesus, then, defending the prayer of the Jews? No, he is not. He is rather a transformer of Jewish prayer. He begins to criticize the abuse of prayer. He ridiculed the hypocrites who loved their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners. The Gospel of Matthew says,

"When you pray do not repeat and repeat as the pagans do; for they imagine that for their much talking they will secure a hearing."⁴

Jesus demanded that social obligations and justice be taken care of before prayer. For him, social justice and right relationships are requisits for prayer (Matt. 5:23-24). He taught prayer differently. Jesus taught his disciples that a prayerful attitude was a prerequisite

⁴Matthew 6:7.

to becoming disciples. Matthew Fox tried to contrast two facets of prayer appearing in the Gospels. It is important for us to be aware of these different approaches.

"The emphasis on justice and one's just moral setting for prayer is an emphasis in Matthew's Gospel, while the emphasis in Luke's Gospel (often called, inaccurately, the Gospel of prayer) is on liturgical and cultic prayer. The reason for this difference in approaches to prayer is that Matthew's Gospel was intended for persons who already had some contact with prayer in their lives (those who were in need of a critique of their prayer), while Luke's was intended for newcomers to prayer (who could find exhilaration in Jewish worship)."⁵

Jesus attacked the Pharisees' attitude toward prayer, knowing that they had neglected to rid themselves of pride and extortion. He perceived that they were just saying prayers, the inherited prayers. He demands love and care more than utterance. The first letter of John says; "-e who says he loves God and hates his neighbor is a liar (1 John 4:20)."

Christian prayer, therefore, should reflect the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, particularly the last years of his life on earth. Those who believe in Jesus Christ should keep His name in their prayers. We learn Christian prayer from Christ. We have already been taught about Him and his teachings concerning prayer. We are called to pay

⁵Matthew Fox, On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear (New York: Paulist Press, 1972) 4.

more attention to Matthew's teachings.

Jesus Christ is the founder of Christian prayer. He showed it to us through his life. We should cry out to God in our extreme needs as Jesus did.

"His prayers take place amid groanings and sweatings of blood and shedding of tears and wrestling with evil spirits- in his retreat to the desert, in the Garden of Gethsemane before his death, on the Cross of death, at the tomb of his dead friend Lazarus. Far from being comfortable, Jesus' prayer is accompanied by suffering or by extreme joy or anxiety, as before his choice of apostles or before his messianic baptism."⁶

B. THE TECHNIQUES OF PRAYER

It is an unfortunate thing that Korean Christians have ignored the value of silent prayer. There are two obvious reasons: our prayers have been based upon supplication, which was caused by socio-political realities. Thus prayers have been understood as a cry for help. Prayers are perceived as pleading instead of listening. On the other hand, silence is used in the Buddhist temple as a method of prayer. Those who converted from Buddhism believed that they must get rid of rituals, including Buddhistic meditation. We should revive the real historical meaning of meditation.

⁶Ibid., 6.

In fact, to be silent in prayer is one of the hardest disciplines to learn. We are neither used to silence, nor are we usually good listeners. Any traveler in need of directions must be able to ask the right questions. By asking the wrong questions, one can hardly expect to get the right answers. Thus the techniques of prayer can apply in the same way. In order to ask for the right things, we should be careful in listening to others. It is even more difficult to be a creative listener.

"The prayer that seeks to communicate without listening is less than half a prayer. When one listens quietly for an answer he employs empathy, sympathy, and identity. Empathy is the ability to feel with others, to share their emotions. Sympathy is the process of accepting the feelings of others, whether they are good or bad. It recognizes the right of the other to be himself, and to be acceptable as that self. Identity is achieved when the person who asks and the person who answers become one in the moment of true understanding."⁷

Jesus used meditation and silence in His life. He went to quiet places to meditate. He sometimes needed relaxation to be silent. When he stood accused by Pilate, he made no defense but kept his silence. Pilate became uneasy when he knew his power had no influence upon Jesus. In despair he made threats and then tried to escape his responsibility for what happened to this man. We should understand that silence can

⁷Edgar N. Jackson, Understanding Prayer (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1968) 126.

be profound and commanding. Jesus urged his followers to seek out quiet places where they might hear rather than be heard. He told us clearly that God knows all our needs without having to be told, so the important communication takes place when we are prepared to listen.

Slow reading of Scripture can often be of greater value than formal meditation in preparation for prayer. The purpose of such reading is quite different from that of reading a novel. We should not read in order to get to the end, but in order to awaken feelings requisite to prayer and praise. Through the Bible we may speak directly to God and know that God speaks directly to us. In prayer we speak to God with our lips and listen to God with our ears.

There is also much devotional literature - classics⁸ which provide the insights and experiences of great men and women of prayer. Our lives are getting too complicated for us to allot time for nurturing spiritual energy. We should set aside a certain time each and every day to engage in prayer. There are many ways to engage in prayer, depending upon the person. No one way is satisfactory for everyone, but at least one hour per day should be set aside to enhance our spiritual health.

"Reserve a half hour each morning and evening. Divide this period into ten minutes for preparation, ten minutes for projecting the mind in creative, wholesome thought about life and its meaning, and ten minutes

⁸For example, Augustine Confessions, Thomas A. Kempis Imitation of Christ, etc.

more for self-examination and plans for the realization of the goals of life contemplated in prayer."⁹

Although we need not confine ourselves to particular times and places, it would be better to choose a quiet place and a suitable time, probably in the evening and in the morning. The Psalmist prays in the evening; "In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for thou alone, O Lord, makest me dwell in safety (4:8)." The Gospel delivers the gracious word of Jesus which we may recite silently before we go to sleep.

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28)."¹⁰ Evening prayer, accordingly, seeks not to equip one for conflict, but to make one ready for rest. It is primarily a prayer of disburdenment. Whatever burden we bear, we need to name it, commend it to God's mercy and power, and finish with thanksgiving. In glad and forthright words we give thanks for all the mercies of God's care. Finally, we ask God to forgive our sins and to remove our sorrow, fear, and anxiety.

Although morning prayer may embody the same elements as evening prayer, it is conducted differently. This is the time to kindle our minds and to prepare for achievement. Morning prayer begins with thanksgiving for the new day and new possibilities. In morning prayer we review our plans and problems before Christ. We inquire the mind

⁹Jackson, 142.

¹⁰Matthew 11:28.

of Christ concerning them. We then let Him shine upon them, and we judge them in the light of His words. We end with commitment. This differs from the commitment of evening prayer, which is as the trust of a child in his father's arms. The morning prayer of commitment should result in action. Finally we ask Him to let us dwell in his Spirit as we go to our work. Then we rejoice. Paul wrote; "I can do all things in him who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)."

There are many obstacles and disturbances which make it difficult to improve prayer life. The most fundamental obstacle is, of course, sin, which is the opposite of the path of prayer. The Scripture is emphatic that it is human sin which separates us from God.

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you so that he does not hear."¹¹

Another human failing that hinders true prayer is our injustice in social relationships.

"When you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood."¹²

What, then, are the disturbances of the mind and heart which

¹¹Isaiah 59:1-2.

¹²Isaiah 1:15.

prevent us from coming closer to God? We can cite noise, boredom, and anxiety. In some ways they can be cured if we try, but one serious problem is the upsurge of bad memory, which causes failures and resentments. It conjures up recollections of the past. Prayer becomes impossible, because we are hung up by feelings of guilt. Christians should know that a time of prayer becomes a battle ground in which one must wrestle with an agitated mind. In a useful section on distractions in prayer, W. H. Longridge listed five specific remedies for use within a particular time of prayer.¹³

- A. Prepare oneself for prayer by recollection.
- B. Attend carefully to posture, punctuality, and detail.
- C. Never leave prayer until it is very late.
- D. When distractions occur, recall the mind by an act of faith.
- E. Accept wearisome conflicts and don't worry about them.

One opportunity to develop techniques could be exploring small group activities. It is good for us to pray together, as a unit of fellowship in a spiritual adventure. The small prayer group is an ideal place to learn and develop the techniques of spirituality. Christians, in the first century, had no church buildings, no well-developed organization, no professionally trained leader. They met together in homes, fields, even in catacombs. It was this kind of small group of powerfully motivated people that changed the Roman empire and finally controlled it. Whenever the Christian church has been

¹³Kenneth Leech, Soul Friend (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977) 181.

spiritually vigorous there has been small group prayer activity taking place.

"John Wesley recognized the importance of small group action for the vitality of the Wesleyan revival. With a keen understanding of group dynamics, he used three different group formations for different purposes. The prayer bands were limited to seven or eight members and met for the purpose of self-examination and discipline in the spiritual life. The class meetings were primarily for the study of the Bible and spiritual classics and in size were limited to twelve or fifteen. The societies were made up of the combined bands and class meetings and were brought together primarily for worship and the support of the overall group life."¹⁴

The praying group can achieve a comradeship and intimacy at the level of life's deeper meaning. It should bring stimulus to the growth of the spirit. It should create a friendly atmosphere which can reduce fears and apprehensions and increase confidence and good will. The praying group is primarily a growing group in terms of the spiritual perception of its individual members.

Techniques used in the small prayer group will build discipline and individual growth. The small group is the ideal atmosphere for stimulating growth toward Christian perfection. We know that these techniques are invalid when we reach the presence of God. This is the real Christian experience which can bring us closer to the higher calling

¹⁴Jackson, 148.

of God.

C. THE PROCESS OF PRAYER

The beginning of prayer is a "calling to God" which shows the place He occupies within us. We are people looking for a God who endures long and patiently and enjoys forgiving us. This God was revealed to the Prophets in the Old Testament. It will be very important for us to explore the biblical understanding of God, which will help to magnify our call to Him at the beginning of our prayers.

Prayer should begin with the adoration of the person of God. It is the appropriate human response to the Being of God. We then offer praise and thanksgiving. We often ignore the giving of thanks to God who gives us things. The first things we Christians should do is to try to realize the extent of our blessing. We sing at first; "Praise God from whom all blessings flow-----." We should seek to adore God who gives us peace and answers in our lives.

"One thing all great spirits in every religion agree upon; the adoration of God is the heart and soul of prayer. It does two things for us that nothing else can do. (a) it puts us and our problems in proper perspective so that all things begin to take on rightful proportions; (b) it enables us to accept and receive the love and help of God and thereby enables us to love and serve others."¹⁵

¹⁵Lance Webb, The Art of personal prayer (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962) 10.

To begin our prayer we call God: the summoning of the Spirit of God. The invocation is not a familiar term in our prayer life. We should know how to pronounce it because it is the beginning of our common public prayer. All prayer can be summarized by the prayer that calls for God's presence in and through us. Thus the invocation is addressed to God. It is usually included in corporate worship.

"We begin our worship with the invocation because it is the indispensable basis for that worship. We have seen that we are in fact incapable of true prayer apart from the intercession of the Spirit. In our godlessness we lack the power to hold God to his promise, to claim this promise rather than fullness and power. This is , after all, why we pray."¹⁶

When we adore God we are able to confess our weaknesses and sins. There is no more liberating and cleansing human experience than sincere confession. The scripture tells us that we will be pardoned if we confess. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."¹⁷ The difficulty comes with being honest. We should be aware of our fears, hatreds, inadequacies, and hostilities in order to pray the prayer of confession. We should also acknowledge our failure to meditate love, mercy, and justice to the world as well as our refusal to seek personal growth and change. Our mature understanding of Christ can deepen and widen our confession. The more we know of Christ, the more keenly we are aware that

¹⁶Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., Life as Worship (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 44.

¹⁷1 John 1:9.

we are sinners. Then we become aware of the sins of all mankind. We begin to intercede, reaching out long arms of yearning that will finally envelop the world. Although this is quite applicable to the practice of personal prayer, it will also be a good practice in prayers of confession.

"Confess and admit your failures, imperfections, sins as well as symptoms. Hold back nothing. Be completely honest so far as you are able to be.

Accept God's loving forgiveness not only for the things which you did which you should not have done, but also for the things you should have done but didn't.

Do not beat and abuse yourself for being imperfect, but take your imperfections and accept them as part of your human limitations. Seek to grow out of them where they are caused by your failure to see and accept God's will. Be impatient with the false only long enough to see and deny it and to accept the true.

Forgive yourself even as God has forgiven you, and without being discouraged set your mind right in the presence of God and continue to grow.

Then rest your life and all your desires and needs peacefully, truthfully, thankfully in God's presence. How to do this latter will be the burden of much that follows."¹⁸

¹⁸Webb, 43.

After the prayer of confession, we shall ask something for ourselves. These are called petitions, supplications, and intercessions. Petition may be the first prayer of infant lips and the last prayer of old age. Even the one word "God", fervently uttered may be a petition, as it means, "God, help us." In our petition we shall pray for whatever we need.

Here we need to understand the difference between prayer and magic.¹⁹ The Bible says that if we pray long enough, God will have to give us what we want. However, God is not at our bidding. We could be calling on magic - not on faith. Christian prayer is not magic called up to control God. Persistence in prayer is needed, not to bend God's will to ours, but to bend our wills to His will. Our petition should be expressed with humility and reverence. The problem we have is either to ask little, or to ask in the wrong way. We can still apply the scriptural verses to our lives:

"You do not have, because you ask wrongly, you ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."²⁰

When we pray we should ask something for others. As the Spirit intercedes for us, within us, and in us, so we should also intercede for our neighbor. In this intercessory prayer we give voice to our neighbor's

¹⁹Jennings, 52. He discussed "unanswered prayer" in the context of petition. He continues to say; prayer is not a strategem for getting what we want. It is simply a holding of God to his promise in which we are repeatedly confronted with the pain and loss that we feel when we permit ourselves to yearn for a kingdom that has not yet come.

²⁰James 4:2-3.

pain and brokenness, and to the cry of our world for God. We should do this, not only in general, but also in particular. What is true of intercession, then, is also true of petition. So intercessory prayer is at the heart of our common prayer. When Bishop Webb suggests the subtitles of the chapter on intercession, he may be suggesting the principles of intercession, too.

"I pray for others because I love them and God loves them. I pray for others because in so doing others are helped and so am I."²¹

We should pray for others, for we can be changed. In so doing our attitudes are being made more Christlike in significant ways. Christ prayed for His enemies, so we should pray for those whom we hate actively. Jesus prayed for them on the Cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."²² So we should pray for our enemies in order to be his disciples. By praying for them, we are fulfilling one of His greatest commandments. Finally our prayerful life should be committed and surrendered to God's will. Unless these things happen, our intercessory prayers are not responded to. So the first requirement for effective prayer is to offer it in an atmosphere of surrender.

"So with Blaise Pascal, strong-minded, stubborn willed philosopher, scientist, Christian layman. During his long illness as he prayed for healing, he ended his prayer with this great surrender of trust; "Thou

²¹Webb, 77-82.

²²Luke 23:34.

art Lord of all: Do what thou wilt. Grant me, take from me, but make my will conform to thine, that being sick as I am, I may glorify thee in my suffering!" This is the spirit of Christlike prayer that enables God to act in us and others."²³

Here are three more practical steps to take in praying for others. Bishop Webb has offered these. They are worthy of our consideration for intercessory prayer.

"Wait in the presence of the glory and majesty and greatness of God in Christ until you are able to surrender to him in complete trust your life and the life of the one for whom you are praying.

Be willing to give yourself, a part of your own life if necessary, in order to help the one for whom you are praying. Your love must be genuinely united with the love of God before your prayer is effective. Give the one for whom you pray to God. Take your hands off. Think of placing his body, his problem, in the hands of the One whose loving mercy and wisdom are unsearchable and whose power and resources are inexhaustible."²⁴

D. THE FRUITS OF PRAYER

We are often tempted to think of prayer in terms of its results. We are also asked, "What comes after prayer?" because we always ask for something in prayer.

²³Luke 23:34.

²⁴Ibid., 97-98.

We are living in a technological society which values only two virtues; utility and efficiency. From this perspective, religion is valued mainly for the service that it can bring to society. Thus prayer can be easily thought of as a means for getting things done. What, then, are the effects of prayer?

We have learned that prayer is not to be thought of primarily as a process of asking and getting. Rather, it is a fellowship between God and humans. It is communion with God and is rather dependent upon a prior activity of God. From this communion we emerge as changed persons.

We confess our sins through prayer. When we begin to confess our infirmities we begin to see ourselves as we are. We see the weakness of our ways and try to return to God's will. We seek forgiveness from God. We should know that we cannot really forgive unless we are confident that we will be forgiven. So we pray repeatedly; "God, be merciful to me a sinner." We have to forgive others in order to be open to God's forgiveness. We, then, can realize the meaning of the Lord's prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

"This is the redirection of life which comes from a sense of being forgiven by God and empowered by him to love even one's enemies. When the love of God takes possession of a life, good will crowds out the sense of injury. One begins praying in love for the person who has injured him. Then one day he realizes- perhaps to his own surprise-

that he does not need to pray for his enemy any more, for the enemy has become a friend."²⁵

As we have said in the previous chapter, prayer brings the experience of growth. To say it more strongly: unless we pray, we will not grow spiritually. Just as the body grows only if it is nourished by food and drink, so the soul needs spiritual nurture. Without spiritual experience creative wholeness cannot be achieved. It is a disappointing thing to see a mentally and physically well-developed person whose spiritual growth is stunted. We cannot but deplore the fact that spiritual growth has been sadly neglected in our time. "One of the benefits of prayer as a stimulator of spiritual development is that the understanding of other persons tends to make it easier to get along with them, to accept them as they are with an appreciation of what makes them speak and act as they do."²⁶

Prayer helps us to be aware of ourselves and also to trust others. Prayer, with experience, stimulates us to grow further toward the goals of Christian maturity, which are essential for Christian perfection. John Wesley placed emphasis on the practice of spiritual exercises toward perfection. From his perspective we are always in the process of becoming. He got up early in the morning to meditate, pray, and study the Scriptures. Without these types of discipline he could

²⁵Harkness, 200-201.

²⁶Jackson, 47.

not have accomplished such tremendous things for the church of Christ. "So it was that John Wesley employed prayer as a powerful instrument toward the goal of achieved meaning of life. For him prayer was not so much an end in itself as it was a means to that end. Just as he saw the church as an instrument to change men, so also he used prayer as the means for change. In the quiet processes of self-examination, men looked within and found an undiscovered reservoir of power, waiting to be mined, pumped out, or refined so that its influences could be used to remake the goals and attitudes of life. In this sense prayer became the transformer of spiritual power."²⁷

Prayer enables us to receive spiritual energy, which allows us to feel the presence of God and to be aware of our new selfhood. It is also an instrument that awakens us to the values that have been ignored by us. It brings attention to a focus that reveals the whole person, the whole society, and the whole church.

We have strayed like lost sheep, which was written in the Methodist hymn book prayer of confession. Guidance is sometimes necessary for those of us who seek to resolve our conflicts. The use of vocational guidance tests helps to determine one's suitability for various types of employment. We should not seek quick and easy answers through prayer. Prayer can direct and guide confused persons who are trying to find their way in life.

There have been many who have presented the highest form of prayer. We need to study their discipline; we can call them our spiritual

²⁷Ibid., 176.

guides. They did not specialize in testing or external standards of measurement. They steadfastly delved deeper and deeper into spiritual resources. For example Martin Luther, John Wesley and Martin Buber carried on lengthy and illuminating correspondence with those whom they served as spiritual guides. The disciplines of prayer that they taught might be the ways that will open us to the discovery of the guidance we need.

"The arts of true prayer are the best means by which the individual develops his sensitivity. Such prayer is the device by which he makes his whole being responsive to the inner kingdom that would assert itself and give direction to life, if and when it is given the opportunity."²⁸

Through the practice of prayer we look, not for theology or techniques, but for peace of mind. There are many things that thwart peace of mind in our daily lives; the failures to get the material goods, the recognitions, the honors, and the comforts. There are moods of self-pity, anger, discouragement, and rebellion against fate. Many people feel frustrated without specific reasons. Adam and Eve were frustrated when they desired to stay in Eden but were driven out. The psychologists say that frustration is the main cause of an inferiority complex. To overcome it, it is suggested that one fulfill, limit, or redirect one's desires.²⁹

²⁸Ibid., 186.

²⁹Harkness, 176-177. She explained, in detail, frustrations and how to overcome them.

What, then, is the place of prayer in this frustrated society? As we have shown in the definition of Christian prayer, we should offer up our frustrations and desires to God for things agreeable to His will. Jesus taught us to ask whatever we desire. We are convinced that, through prayer, we can find guidance and strength which will enable us to overcome our frustration. What God does is to take us as we are and speak through prayers to clarify our anxieties and give us power to solve them. After St. Paul struggled for the Gospel of Christ he witnessed to the Philippian church, telling them what he could accomplish through prayer.

"Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want."³⁰

Prayer is a ministry in itself. It is a form of creative energy to those who want to be changed. It has also a social force. God's power can be released through prayer into society. Prayer directs us both to God and to the world. It can be said that the glory of God is the goal of prayer, while social service is the fruit of prayer.

Christian prayer should give rise to activity that seeks the fulfillment of the prayer request. We do not pray in earnest if we do not commit ourselves to do our best. We must take the risk of becoming involved in the action of prayer. Our prayer will be futile in racial

³⁰Phil. 4:11-12.

peace if we do not extend the hand of friendship toward other races. Bloesch deals with prayer and action to illustrate the story of the Bible.

"Mary and Martha, the two sisters of Bethany, are commonly held up as representative of the contemplative and active lives respectively (Luke 10:38-42). While Mary listened to the words of Jesus, Martha was busy in the kitchen preparing the meal. It is interesting to note that Eckhart regarded Martha more highly than Mary, because in his opinion the former had already achieved contemplation and was now sharing the fruits of her faith and love. Teresa of Avila spoke favorably of both Martha and Mary. The mainstream of Christian spirituality upholds Mary over Martha."³¹

Martin Luther had been known as a man of prayer. It was his devotional fervor, more than anything else, which overcame the obstacles in his path during the difficult days of the Reformation. Prayer energized his life and sent him into action. It brought him courage as he took his stand against powerful forces of that day.

"The great saints of the church were often activists, but their activity was grounded in and informed by prayer. Luther once acknowledged that one day he had so much to do that he had to spend four hours in prayer in order to get everything finished. The greater the responsibilities of the world, the more crucial and necessary is the practice of prayer."³²

³¹Bloesch, 138.

³²Ibid., 149.

In prayer we are lifted out of the littleness and selfishness which limit our thinking, feeling, and doing. We are enabled to see as God sees, and we are moved to act as He would desire us to act. It is here that we find the commission to serve. Prayer and action should happen simultaneously in our Christian life. They result in complementary experiences. Together they bring stability and power to us. Between them our Christian life can find its true rhythm.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

We, Koreans, have a long history of suffering. The sufferings that the Israelites experienced in the wilderness and in oppression from foreign countries were almost the same as our experiences. Our political and economical situations were at stake, particularly during the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century. We were helpless and desperate, like lost sheep. At that time, we were put in contact with the new religion, Christianity, which gave us power to survive and a revitalizing way of life. Suffering has made us look for God and ask Him to help us in overcoming it. It has caused us to pray for survival and deliverance. Suffering was a kind of national discipline and training. Thus, the suffering of Christ could easily appeal to our hearts and enable us to follow Christianity.

In the light of this basic premise, the writer began to ask, first, who the gods were, in the traditional religions, in order to clarify our Christian identity. The gods we called were continually changing as Korean history continued, from Polytheism to polytheistic-monotheism. We found out that we had a monotheistic concept of God, in the earlier period, which could later facilitate the acceptance of Christianity. The concept of monotheism was well revealed in the "Ha na nim," though it was to be called by other names.

Shamanism was an ancient religion that has been practiced in this land. Other religions could be indigenous but based upon the

shamanistic frame of reference. Buddhism gave us many insights and intuitions which facilitated self-examination through spiritual discipline. It taught us that we could be Buddhas by constant negation of meditation, since "Buddha" could be translated either as "god" or "the enlightened one." The major task of Buddhistic discipline was to seek the true self rather than the true God. Confucianism has had much greater influence in our daily lives than Buddhism has had. Although there were some ideas of divination, Confucius did not say much about god and religious life. Rather, he taught social principles and ethics, which were bound up with the principles of rightness.

Korean Christians know how Koreans worshipped the gods before Christianity came to Korea. We learned the Christian religion from American missionaries; how to worship God and how to behave. We recognized that unless we knew our old religions and cultural heritages we could not be mature Christians. Christian life was thus inevitably mingled with other religious observances in Korea.

The Korean Christian church began its work and established its influence through revivals in the early days of the Christian missions. The revivals, in the period of the great awakening, were characterized by evangelistic preaching, Bible study and prayer meetings. Present day revivals have lost these traditions. We have to learn from the past. The revivals caused the Korean church to grow very rapidly since then. As an outcome of the revival movement, the Korean church has practiced early morning prayer. The writer tried to clarify this by interviewing a retired Korean Methodist bishop. He then called for a renewal of its

rigidity in a way that prayer life could respond to present spiritual needs.

There are young Christians who have begun to challenge our person-centered life. They are trying to get their churches to be indigenous in order to meet new demands. They have tried to form a MINJUNG theology (Theology of people) which is able to give a better perspective to Christian life. They begin to reread the Bible, feeling that the Prophets are the spokesmen for the poor and the Psalms are the glad songs of the poor. Jesus' message is concerned with marginal persons. Biblical references are to be interpreted so as to clarify God's voice and presence. The MINJUNG theology must develop further before its shape is clearly known. Efforts along these lines have yet to bear much fruit, however, we expect this work to be fruitful in the future.

Through the field study, the writer confirmed that the Korean Christians living in the United States had not changed their basic understanding of prayer. The results indicated that prayer life must be changed in ways that will make it more responsive to the lives of immigrant Christians. They are still anticipating a strengthening of their personal prayer. We were informed that they have been challenged to renew their prayer life in the light of larger perspectives. The results revealed that they have ignored the Bible and meditation as tools to learn to pray effectively.

In the fourth chapter, the writer has tried to formulate a theology of prayer which will be responsive to the Korean church. He

gained a little knowledge of process theology when he tried to identify the being of our God. Traditional theology has denied that God can suffer. God should be protected and prohibited from pain. We believe that God suffered in Jesus' crucifixion, and is still able to suffer iwth us. God entered into the world voluntarily in order to share our sufferings and to heal our wounds. What is important is to place our prayers in the position of the crucified Christ and to surrender ourselves to His will.

The writer chose two theologians and studied their understanding of prayer. Their prayer had been formed according to their spiritual demands. We have learned that their spiritual disciplines were closely realted to their faith. Martin Luther insisted that "Faith is prayer and nothing but prayer." The writer also chose four topics related to our demands in the Christian life. These points were reinforced in the following chapter, because they should be understood.

In the fifth chapter the writer has set four topics for use in l-arning to pray. First, he tried to define what Christian prayer is, because we should be aware of our Christian identity. He suggested that prayer become more like the prayers of Christ, which He taught and explained to us in the New Testament. Thus, we found that we were forced to study the Bible in order to deepen our perception of prayer.

We find that prayer provides the opportunity for self-examination, for new resolution, and for guidance from God. The prayer hour is the time in which our hearts are fortified to endure afflictions

and difficulties. It is also possible to use this time for expressing our needs so that the power of Jesus is enabled to work in us. We pointed out that prayer was not so much asking for the self. It was rather the act of listening, giving, accepting, and adjusting rather than speaking, getting, rejecting, and dominating things. The writer thus called for reviving true prayer, as it must be accompanied with action and commitment.

Finally, the writer would like to suggest a few things which we should take into consideration for growing in Christ Jesus.

First, we should reconsider the positive traditional spiritualities which were revealed in the old religions. We found out that we needed to know our old religions and their spiritualities. They have had two functions; first they were powerless in terms of vitality, so they facilitated the movement toward Christianity in times of crisis. They taught us how to be patient, passionate, and loyal to God. Second, they misguided those who wanted to understand Christian spirituality. They tried to degrade Christian religion. There are many Christians who still believe that prayer is a tool of magic. We should learn Christian faith by comparing it to the other faiths.

Second, we should evaluate the present revivals conducted by the Korean church. Many malfunctions of the revivals have been revealed. Revivals, which we have cherished, should be transformed in character into various discipleship training sessions. Accordingly, we should invent suitable programs for evangelism, missions, and membership.

Third, our prayer activities have allowed us to be people of prayer. Early morning prayer sessions will inevitably be flexible in terms of content and form. The time must be flexible - from 4:30 to 7:00 in the morning. Within the Methodist church there have been class meetings each Friday night, in homes. These were initiated by John Wesley, who led the small group movement. We may take advantage of this meeting as a prayer group. There we can help and be helped by sharing our sufferings and joys.

Fourth, we have prayed much in homes and in churches, as well. However, we do not have satisfactory programs except the revivals. We have to develop prayer programs which will include all age levels; for example, private prayer, public prayer, and intercessory prayer. Most of all, we need new leadership and new leaders to carry responsibility for those things for the Korean church of Christ.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Balasuriva, Tissa. The Eucharist and Human Liberation. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1977.
- Bauman, Edward W. Intercessory Prayer. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952.
- Bloesch, Donald G. The Struggle of Prayer. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. The Cost of Discipleship. New York: Macmillan, 1961.
- Cargas, Harry James, and Bernard Lee (eds.) Religious Experience and Process Theology. New York: Paulist Press, 1976.
- Center for Asian-American Ministries. The Directory of Asian-American Methodist Ministries and Churches. Claremont, CA: School of Theology at Claremont, 1981.
- Clark, Allen D. A History of the Church in Korea. Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1971.
- Clark, Charles A. Religions of Old Korea. Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1961.
- Cobb, John B., Jr. The Structure of Christian Existence. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967.
- _____. To Pray or not to Pray. Nashville: Upper Room, 1974.
- Creel, H. G. Confucius and the Chinese Way. New York: Harper & Row, 1949.
- Dunnam, Maxie, and others. Exploring the Dimension of Prayer. Nashville: Upper Room, 1979.
- Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. ed. James Hastings. 12 vols. Edinburgh: Clark, 1954.
- Fisher, Fred. Prayer in the New Testament. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964.
- Fox, Matthew. On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear. New York: Paulist Press, 1972.
- Fung, Yu-Lan. A History of Chinese Philosophy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952.

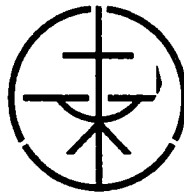
- Garrett, Constance. Growth in Prayer. New York: Macmillan, 1953.
- Gerstenberger, Erhard S., and Wolfgang Schrage. Suffering. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980.
- Griffiss, James E. A Silent Path of God. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Harkness, Georgia. Prayer and the Common Life. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1929.
- Hong, Harold S. (ed.) Korea: Struggles for Christ. Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1966.
- Hutchison, John A. Path of Faith. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969.
- Institute of Korean Cultural Research. Hankook Moonwhasa Daekye (The General History of Korean Culture). 6 vols. Seoul: Korea University Press, 1978.
- Interpreter's Bible. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954.
- Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. 4 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980.
- Jackson, Edgar N. Understanding Prayer. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1968.
- Jennings, Theodore W., Jr., Life as Worship. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- _____. "Prayer: The Call for God." Christian century, 98 (April 5, 1981) 410-14.
- Jones, George H. The Korea Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church. New York: Board of Foreign Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, 1910.
- Kim, Chong-Choon. "The Confessing Church in Korea."
- Kitamori, Kazoh. Theology of the Pain of God. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965.
- Lee, Jung Yong. "The Seasonal Rituals of Korean Shamanism." History of Religions, 12 (February 1973) 271-85.
- Leech, Kenneth. Soul Friend. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977.

- _____. True Prayer. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980.
- LeFevre, Perry. Understanding of Prayer. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981.
- Metz, Johann. The Courage to Pray. New York: Crossroad, 1981.
- Min, Kyung Bae. Church History of Korea. Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1973.
- Mohler, James A. The Sacrament of Suffering. Notre Dame: Fides/Claretian, 1979.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. Experience of God. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Paik, George L. The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910. Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1970.
- Palmer, Spencer. Korea and Christianity. Seoul: Holly, 1967.
- Park, Aaron. Theology of Daybreak Prayer. Seoul: Sejong, 1974.
- Ryan, John B. The Eucharist Prayer. New York: Paulist Press, 1974.
- Ryu, Tongshik. The Christian Faith Encounters the Religions of Korea. Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1965.
- Sauer, Charles A. (ed.) Within the Gate. Seoul: Korea Methodist News Service, 1934.
- Spencer, Bonnell. God who Dare to be Man. New York: Seabury Press, 1980.
- Stanley, David M. Boasting in the Lord. New York: Paulist Press, 1973.
- Thomson, James. The Praying Christ. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959.
- Thurman, Howard. Disciplines of the Spirit. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1977.
- Unamuno, Miguel De. Tragic Sense of Life. New York: Dover, 1954.
- Walshe, Maurice O. Pathways of Buddhist Thought. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- Webb, Lance. The Art of Personal Prayer. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962.

White, James F. New Forms of Worship. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971.

Woodhouse, H. F. "Pneumatology and Process Theology." Scottish Journal of Theology, 25 (November 1972) 383-91.

APPENDIX



APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT

1981년 9월 15일

친애하는 목사님에게

하나님의 은혜와 위로가 귀가정과 교회에 함께 하시길 바랍니다.

본인은 내년 연합감리교회에서 목사안수를 받을려고 준비하며 크레몽트 신학 대학원에 재학중인 양재서입니다.

한국교회의 부흥은 기도의 결실이며 우리는 기도 많이 하는 한국교회를 유산으로 갖고 있습니다. 그럼에도 불구하고 기도에 대한 오해와 문제를 많이 갖고 있다고 봅니다. 기도에 관한 바른 태도와 방법을 익혀야 한다고 확신하고 목회학박사 논문을 준비하고 있습니다.

귀 교회 평신도 2분에게 아래 설문지를 주셔서 우표 주소가 부착된 봉투를 사용하여 회신하도록 도와 주시면 대단히 감사하겠습니다. 시간은 20-30분정도 소모될 것이며 응답자의 성함이나 교회를 밝히지 않아도 되겠습니다. 설문지의 회송이 10월 10일까지 저에게 도착되면 좋겠습니다.

끝으로 목사님의 협조에 다시 한번 감사를 드립니다.

양 재 서 드림

Dear Pastors,

As Mr. Yang's doctoral degree advisor, I do hope you will encourage your members to respond promptly to his request. The amount and quality of data he gathers will determine how effective his dissertation will be.

Yours in Christ,
Cornish R. Rogers,
Associate Professor
of Pastoral Theology.

Cornish R. Rogers

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please do the check what you feel like. Yes, No, Unsure,

- | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Do you believe everyone prays? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Do you have a daily time of prayer? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Is prayer significant in the decisions
you make in your life? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Do you usually experience an awareness
of God's presence when you pray? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Do you feel a need to grow in your
private prayer life? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Do you have a group of persons with whom
you pray regularly? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Do you feel comfortable praying aloud? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Do others ask you to pray for them? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 9. Do you regularly experience God's love
through other persons? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 10. Has God spoken to you through other
persons? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 11. Do you regularly experience unity with
other Christians, both past and present,
when you worship? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 12. Are you able effectively to translate
your worship experience into the problems
of daily life? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

	Yes,	No,	Unsure,
13. Is it possible for the worship service to be a one-hour prayer experience?	_____	_____	_____
14. Do you believe the ritual of Sunday worship can have deep personal meaning for your prayer experience?	_____	_____	_____
15. Is it possible for you to be a bearer of Christ's presence (a symbol of prayer) in all of your life?	_____	_____	_____
16. Can intercessory prayer make a difference in another person's life?	_____	_____	_____
17. Do you pray for persons in need beyond the bounds of your community?	_____	_____	_____
18. Are you willing to grow in the life of intercessory prayer?	_____	_____	_____
19. Are you in need to have a prayer center which can care for every person's need?	_____	_____	_____
20. Are you ready to determine to be a partner of intercessory prayer if it is demand?	_____	_____	_____
21. Is prayer itself a problem for you?	_____	_____	_____
22. Do you think that prayer can be possible anytime and anywhere?	_____	_____	_____
23. Do you think that prayer and action must go together?	_____	_____	_____

	Yes,	No,	Unsure,
24. Do you care if prayer is long or short?	_____	_____	_____
25. Do you feel a need for a response when you pray?	_____	_____	_____
26. Do you think that meditation or contemplation are necessary in order to pray to God?	_____	_____	_____
27. Do you need additional materials for your prayer life?	_____	_____	_____
28. Have you ever had a training session for prayer?	_____	_____	_____
29. Do you feel any need for a program of prayer within your church?	_____	_____	_____
30. Do you think that you need a discipline like an early morning prayer session?	_____	_____	_____

Write any comments about prayer and prayer life in the back.

APPENDIX B

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions	Yes,	No,	Unsure,
(1) Do you believe everyone prays?	11(46%)	11(46%)	2(8%)
(2) Do you have a daily time of prayer?	18(75%)	3(13%)	3(12%)
(3) Is prayer significant in the decisions you make in your life?	21(88%)		3(12%)
(4) Do you usually experience an awareness of God'd presence when you pray?	18(75%)	1(4%)	5(21%)
(5) Do you feel a need to grow in your private prayer life?	22(92%)		2(8%)
(6) Do you have a group of persons with whom you pray regularly?	8(33%)	15(63%)	1(4%)
(7) Do you feel comfortable praying aloud?	12(50%)	9(38%)	3(12%)
(8) Do others ask you to pray for them?	19(79%)	4(17%)	1(4%)
(9) Do you regularly experience God's love through other persons?	19(79%)	2(8%)	3(13%)
(10) Has God spoken to you through other persons?	19(79%)	1(4%)	4(17%)
(11) Do you regularly experience unity with other Christians, both past and present when you worship?	19(79%)	3(13%)	2(8%)

(12)	Are you able to translate effectively your worship experience into the problems of daily life?	16(67%)	2(8%)	6(25%)
(13)	Is it possible for the worship service to be a one-hour prayer experience?	10(42%)	9(38%)	5(20%)
(14)	Do you believe the ritual of Sunday worship can have deep personal meaning for your prayer experience?	19(79%)	2(8%)	3(13%)
(15)	Is it possible for you to be a bearer of Christ's presence (a symbol of prayer) in all of your life?	16(67%)	1(4%)	7(29%)
(16)	Can intercessory prayer make a difference in another person's life?	20(83%)	1(4%)	3(13%)
(17)	Do you pray for persons in need beyond the bounds of your community?	19(79%)	3(13%)	2(8%)
(18)	Are you willing to grow in the life of intercessory prayer?	21(88%)		3(12%)
(19)	Are you in need of a prayer center which can care for every person's need?	16(67%)	6(25%)	2(8%)

(20)	Are you ready to commit yourself to be a partner of intercessory prayer if it is demanded?	17(71%)	2(8%)	5(21%)
(21)	Is prayer itself a problem for you?	8(33%)	16(67%)	
(22)	Do you think that prayer can be possible anytime and anywhere?	23(96%)	1(4%)	
(23)	Do you think that prayer and action must go together?	14(58%)	5(21%)	5(21%)
(24)	Do you care if prayer is long or short?	10(42%)	13(54%)	1(4%)
(25)	Do you feel a need for a response when you pray?	19(79%)	3(13%)	2(8%)
(26)	Do you think that meditation or contemplation are necessary in order to pray to God?	12(50%)	9(38%)	3(12%)
(27)	Do you need additional materials for your prayer life?	7(29%)	12(50%)	5(21%)
(28)	Have you ever had a training session for prayer?	10(42%)	14(58%)	
(29)	Do you feel any need for a program of prayer within your church?	20(84%)	2(8%)	2(8%)
(30)	Do you think that you need a discipline like an early morning prayer session of the Korean church in the U.S.?	7(29%)	9(38%)	8(33%)

COMMENTS OF RESPONDENTS

The respondents were asked to write any comments about prayer and prayer life if they wish to in the following space. There were 5 respondents who wrote one or two sentences. Among them two persons wrote in Korean. Thus the writer will put answers into this discussion as they were given in the questionnaires.

- 1) When I pray to God, I feel good and have some power and energy.
- 2) I think that the prayer is the only way to survive our life.
- 3) Prayer is one of the most important factors in religious life.
- 4) Please explain why these questions are needed and let us know who you are and where these are being used.
- 5) The sentences are not easy to understand when written in English, so please write them in Korea.

WRITER'S COMMENTS

- 1) The scoring is calculated with the percentile based upon all of the responses (24 persons). The percentile was rounded off to the nearest percentage point.
- 2) Out of 720 possible answers three blanks were left unchecked. These unchecked blanks were counted as "unsure" answers.
- 3) The percentile in this chapter can be interpreted as this; 50% or below suggests doubt, 51%-69% suggests mild agreement, 70%-79% tells agreement, and 80% or above says strong agreement.